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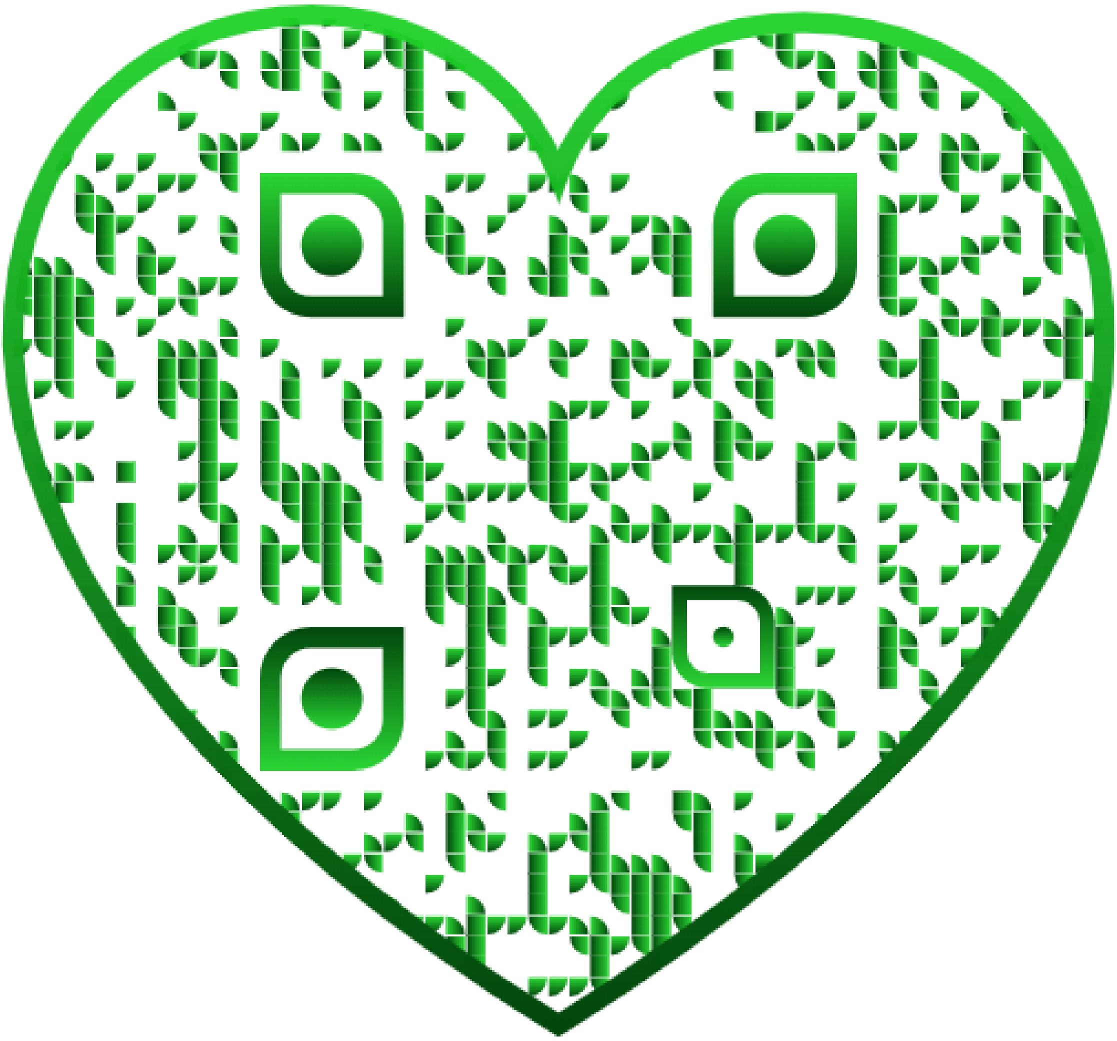

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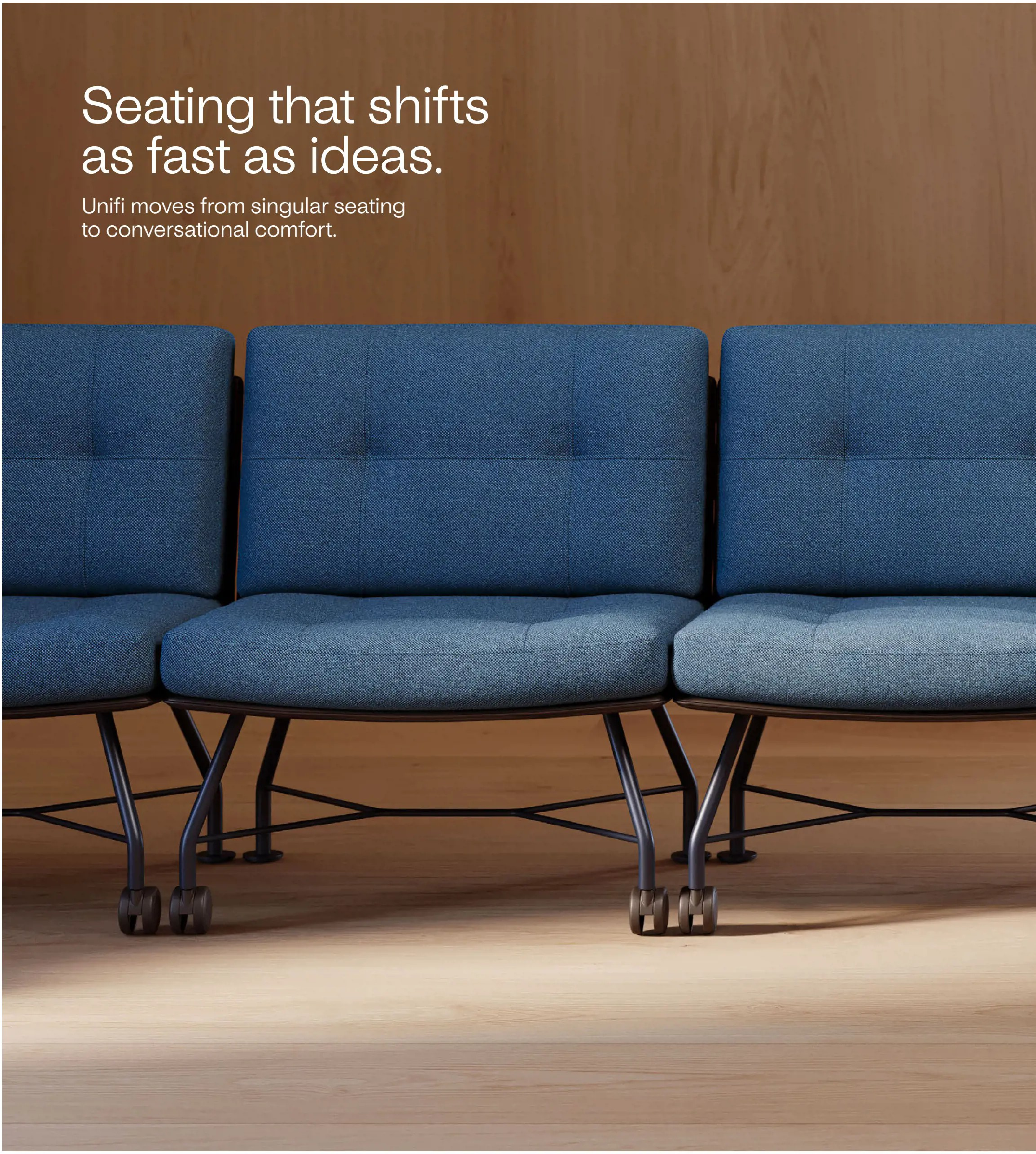

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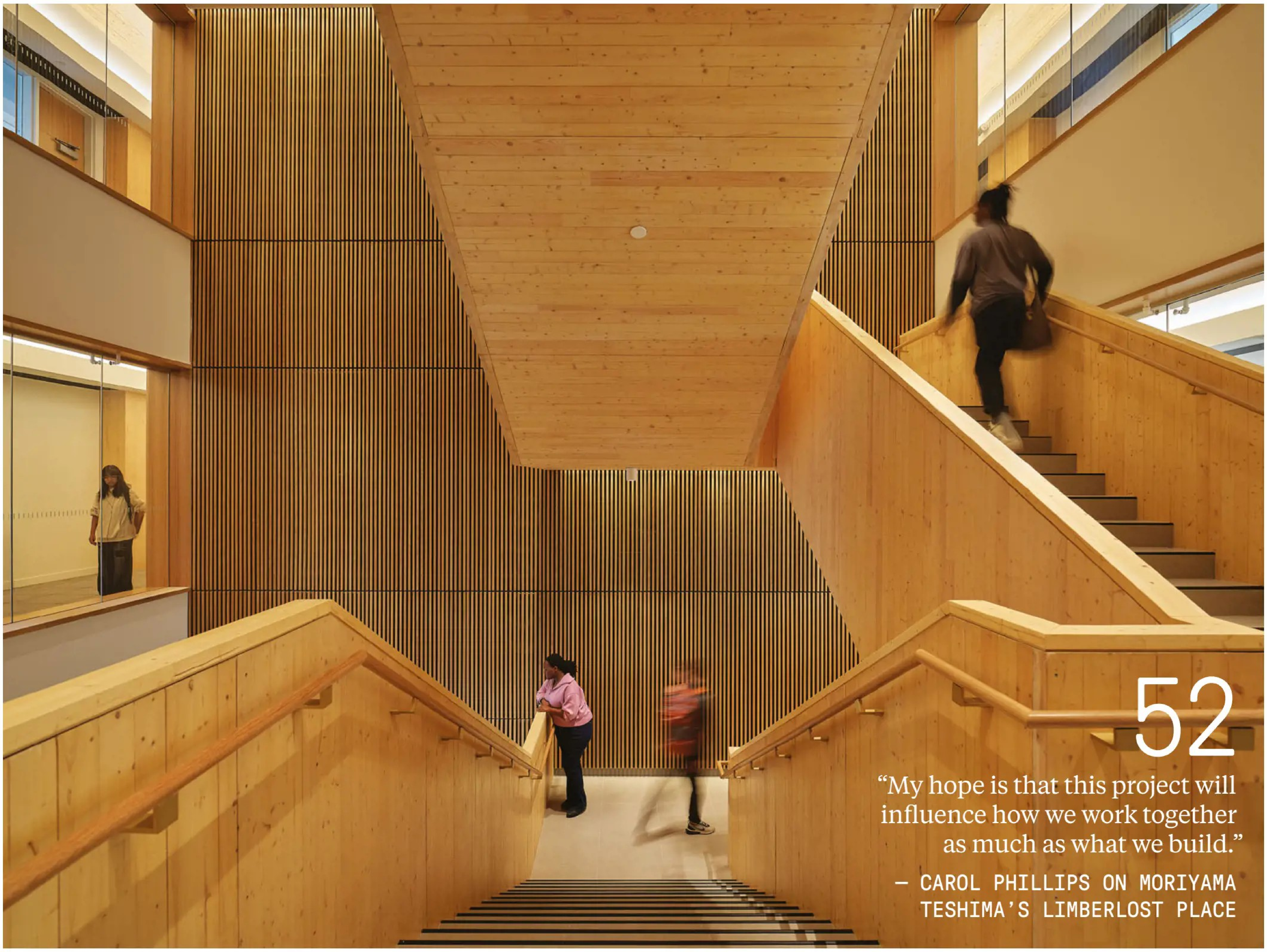

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"My hope is that this project will influence how we work together as much as what we build."

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PHOTO BY DOUBLESPACE

COVER PHOTO: The Koffler Scientific Reserve by Montgomery Sisam features soaring interiors. Photo by Doublespace

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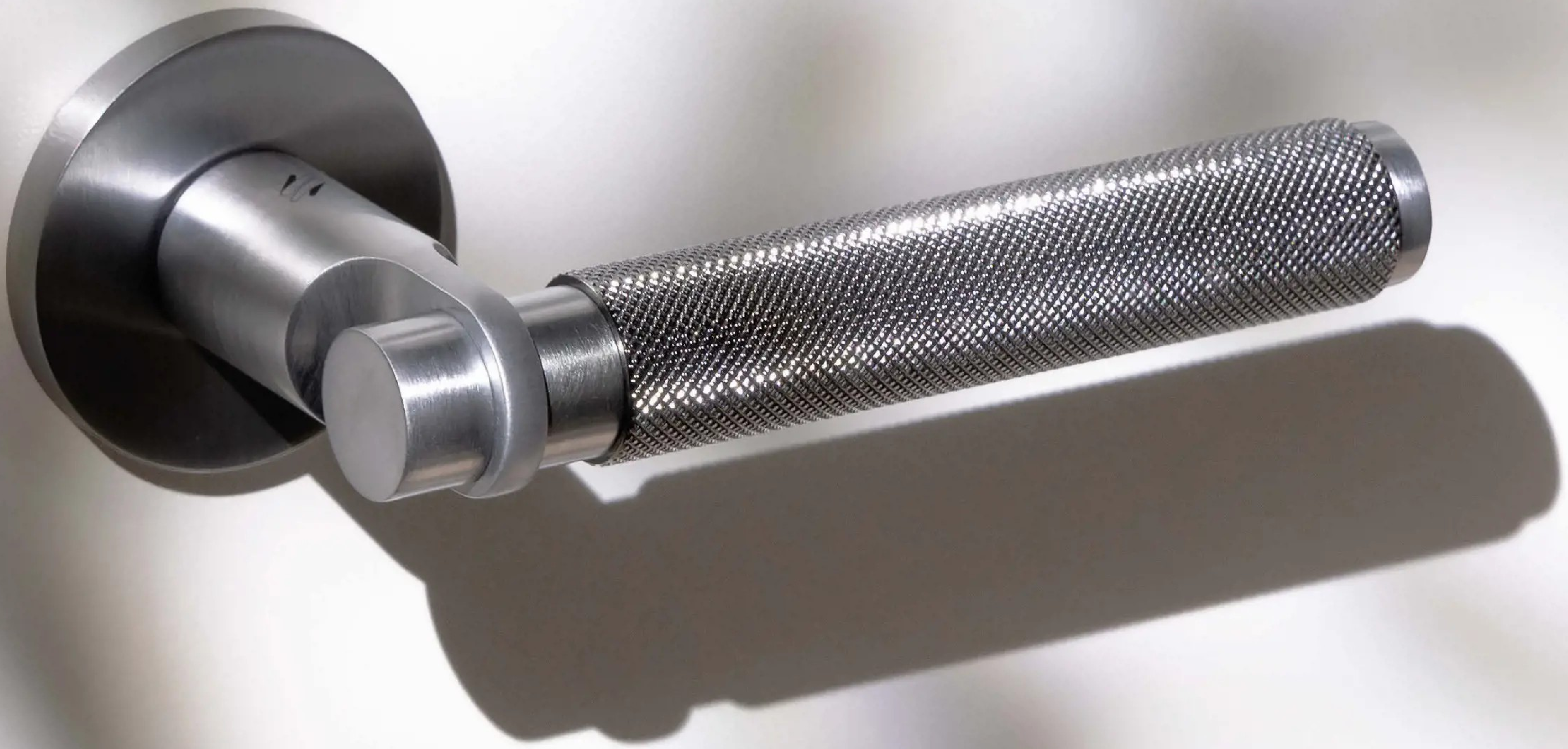

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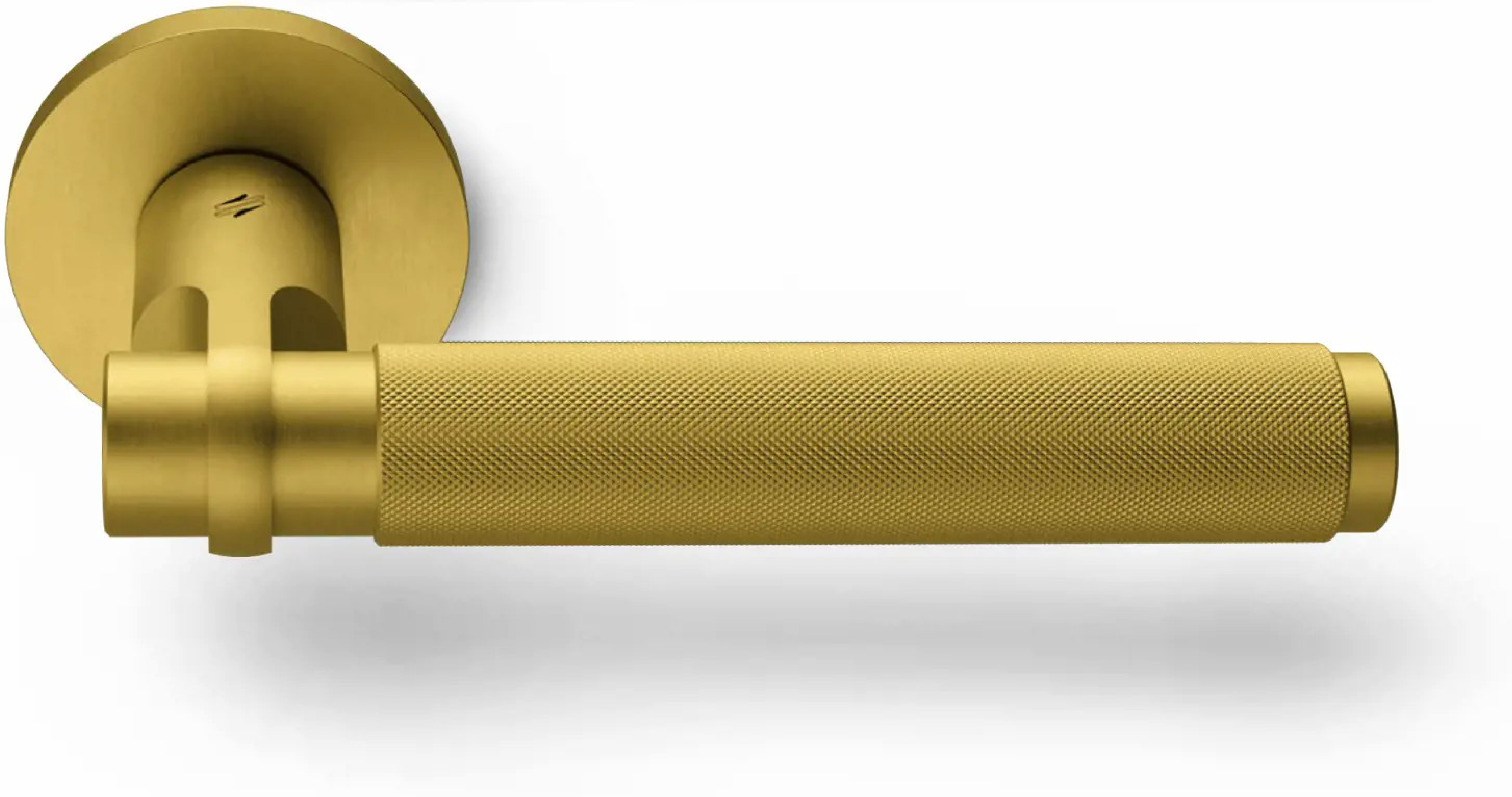

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PHOTOS BY ERIC MUTRIE (MONTREAL); JENNIFER HUGHES (KITCHEN)

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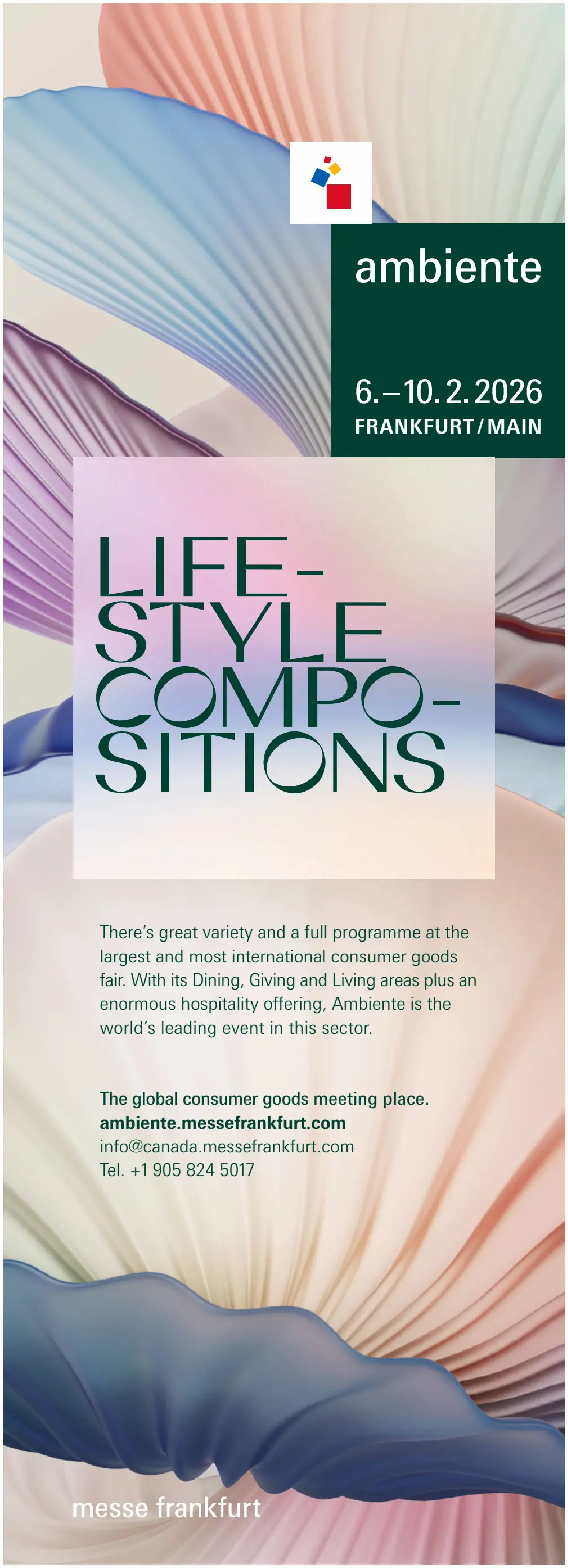

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Elizabeth Pagliacolo

ART DIRECTOR
Brian Wong

DEPUTY EDITOR
Kendra Jackson

SENIOR EDITORS
Eric Mutrie, Stefan Novakovic

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Sydney Shilling

DIGITAL DESIGNER
Nicole Palomo

DESIGNER
Tori Rapp

COPY EDITOR
David Dick-Agnew

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER
Jeffrey Bakazias
jeffrey@azureonline.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER
Alexandra Pagliaro
alexandra@azureonline.com

DIRECTOR INTEGRATED PRODUCTION
Alessandro Cancian

MARKETING MANAGER
Sanoja Weesinghe

MARKETING COORDINATOR
Rossinie Borlaza (on leave)

ADMINISTRATION
Olga Chernyak

CONTRIBUTORS
Veronika Aquila, Iwan Baan, Simone Bossi, Jean-François Briére, Andrés Cedillo, Alexandra De Cossette, Doublespace, Giovanna Dunmall, Rafael Gamo, JoAnn Greco, Jennifer Hughes, Corey Kelly, Peter Landers, Darius Laprise, Zaickz Moz, Carolyn Pioro, Corinna Reeves, James Retief, Alessandro Saletta, Spaceshift Studio, Wolfgang Tillmans, Bianca Weeko Martin, Adrien Williams, Ana Karina Zatarain, Jens Ziehe

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CO-FOUNDERS
Nelda Rodger
Sergio Sgaramella,
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EVP STRATEGY & REVENUE
Jacqueline Loch

COO
Francesco Sgaramella

Letters to the Editor: *azure@azureonline.com*

Subscription queries: *customerservice@azureonline.com*

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Customer service: (416) 203-9674
Email: **customerservice@azureonline.com**
Website: **azuremagazine.com/subscribe**
By mail: *Azure* Magazine, Subscriber Services,
213 Sterling Road, Suite 206,
Toronto, ON Canada M6R 2B2

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Staff: firstname@azureonline.com

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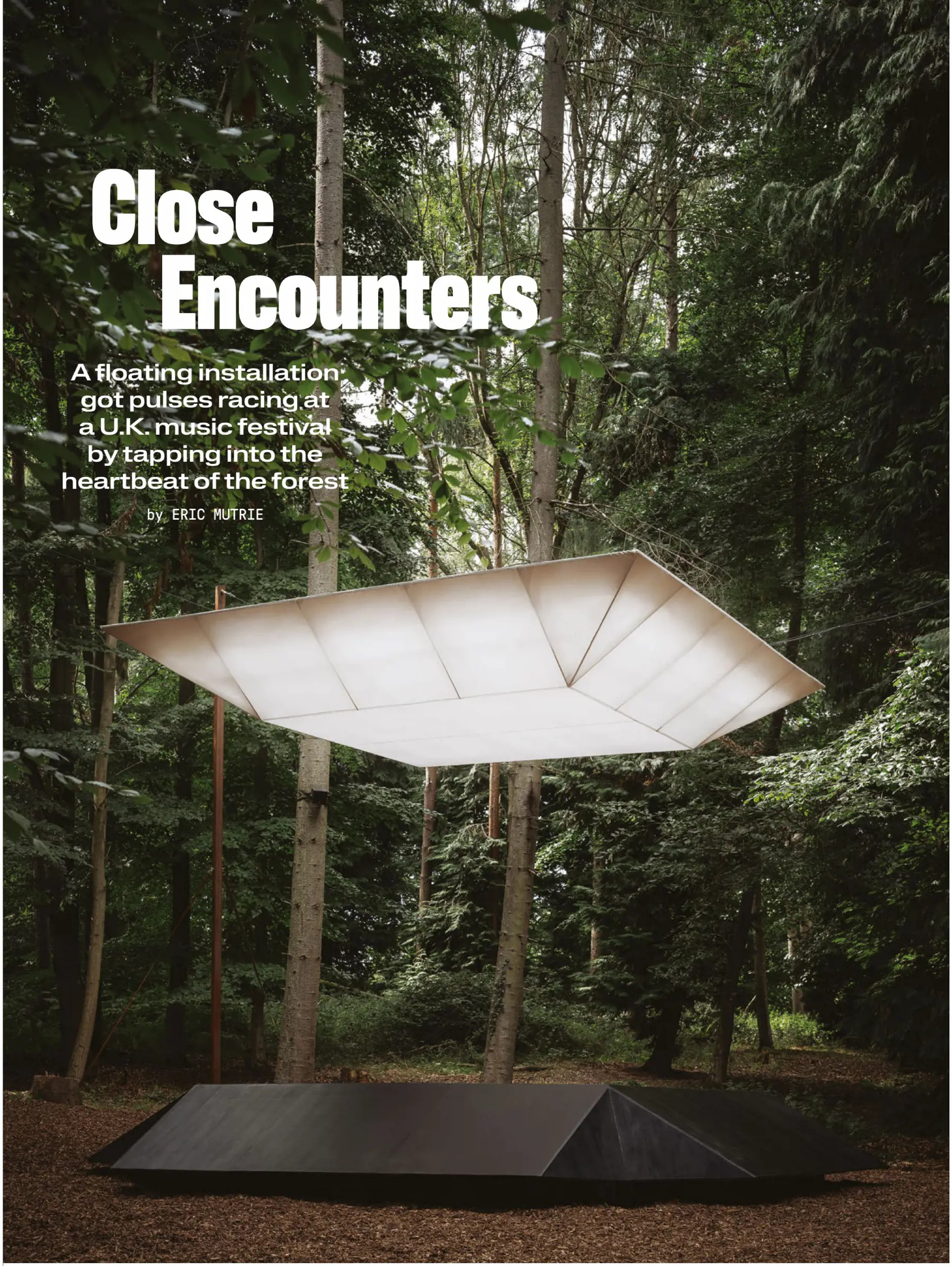


Close Encounters

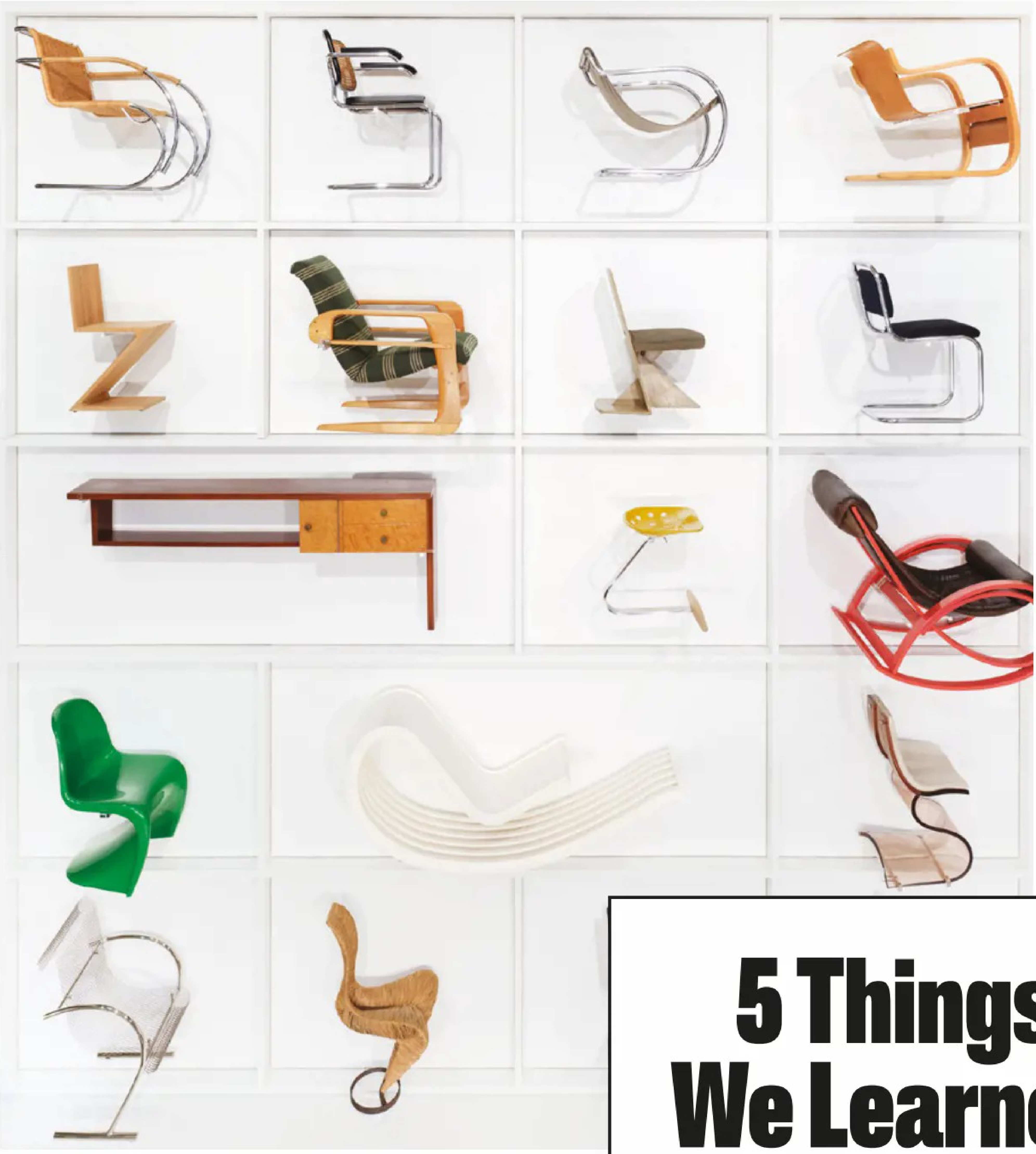
A floating installation got pulses racing at a U.K. music festival by tapping into the heartbeat of the forest

by ERIC MUTRIE

AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT debuted during this past August's edition of Houghton Festival, the four-day lineup of musical performances and art installations held each summer in Norfolk, U.K. An architectural folly in two parts — a black podium and a spacecraft-like canopy that hovers several metres above it — *Pulse* is the otherworldly brainchild of architect Benni Allan, founder of London firm EBBA. But for all its surreal, extraterrestrial appeal, the glowing attraction didn't exactly fly in from a galaxy far, far away. Instead, it time-travelled from the turn of the 20th century: The top half of the structure, constructed from plywood sheets wrapped in a translucent waterproof textile, is based on Alexander Graham Bell's tetrahedral kites.

Otherwise, *Pulse* is as rooted in the earth as it is reaching for the sky. Environmental sensors capture the vibrations of surrounding trees and translate them into sound waves and light pulses. In between concerts, people gathered on the podium to take part in an experience that combined the best parts of forest bathing and sound therapy. (Well-being is one of Allan's major focuses.) Thanks to its interactive relationship with its setting, the cosmic spectacle found a way to connect people with nature rather than distract them from it. And while the rest of the festival wrapped up this summer, the piece will remain a permanent fixture of its site — charting the steady heartbeat of the forest through the changing seasons ahead. AZ

PHOTO BY JAMES RETIEF



5 Things We Learned from Rachel Gotlieb

The curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts design collection discusses bird's nest seating and Bixi bikes

by ERIC MUTRIE

MONTREAL CEMENTS ITS STATUS as an essential design pilgrimage with Habitat 67, but beyond that blocky landmark lies another major attraction: one of North America's largest portfolios of decorative arts and design, held by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. When it came time for the gallery to reinstall this collection — housed in the brutalist Liliane and David M. Stewart Pavilion, by architect Fred David Lebensold — it turned to Rachel Gotlieb, founding curator of Toronto's Design Exchange. Her challenge: Chart global design history in a mere 800 objects.

The resulting permanent exhibition, "From the Functional to the Fabulous," considers two main perspectives. The first level focuses on furniture as a form of cultural expression, while upstairs unpacks the functional side of things, with a retro iMac and other office tech in one corner and a seat from the Concorde joining transportation infrastructure in another. "The museum's design collection is interesting because so much of it is created as art — think of Gianni Ruffi's bird nest–shaped La Cova sofa, or even Gaetano Pesce's Big Mama chair. But then there is also Egmont Arens and Theodore Brookhart's cast aluminum meat slicer," Gotlieb explains. Clusters of objects all made from the same material and a chronological timeline of major movements round out the nearly 2,000-square-metre showcase. At the heart of it all is Dale Chihuly's glass sculpture *The Sun*, which previously held court on the museum's front steps each summer. As Gotlieb says, the sculpture underscores the surrounding designs as "objects of wonder" in their own right. Here, she expands on the thinking behind her curation.

① Great Minds Think Alike

"One way to learn about design is through osmosis and observing these common themes that inspire designers across many regions and time frames. The body, nature and abstraction: These are universal ideas presented at the beginning of the show, with surprising connections but also some amazing juxtapositions. In the Figuration display, we have Eero Saarinen's Womb sofa next to Faye Toogood's Roly Poly chair, designed while she was pregnant."

② Bucky Fuller Was the OG Gwyneth

"For other groupings, I built off of really unique strong anchor objects. For instance, Buckminster Fuller's prefab, self-contained Dymaxion bathroom module, made of four stamped sheets of metal, leads a Well-Being display. I was surprised by how many other pieces there were in the collection that related to *toilette* — everything from 18th-century porcelain barber bowls to Braun electric shavers. Plus, there is this incredible ceremonial armchair with 'Well-being' carved in the crest rail made in Montreal in the 1880s. People might think of wellness as part of today's culture, but there's always been a lot of discussion in design about hygiene and things like the importance of sunlight for mental health."

③ Embrace Off-the-Wall Ideas

"At the back of the ground floor is the Cantilevered Modernism wall, including 17 chairs and one desk that all feature some sort of floating structural element. You'll see the Cesca armchair by Marcel Breuer, but also Verner Panton's plastic chair. For the display, we took inspiration from Lebensold's amazing architecture, with its poured concrete coffered ceiling, and created a display grid — then extended each chair off the wall. It became another way for us to talk about modernism and cantilever engineering."

④ Give Canada Its Due

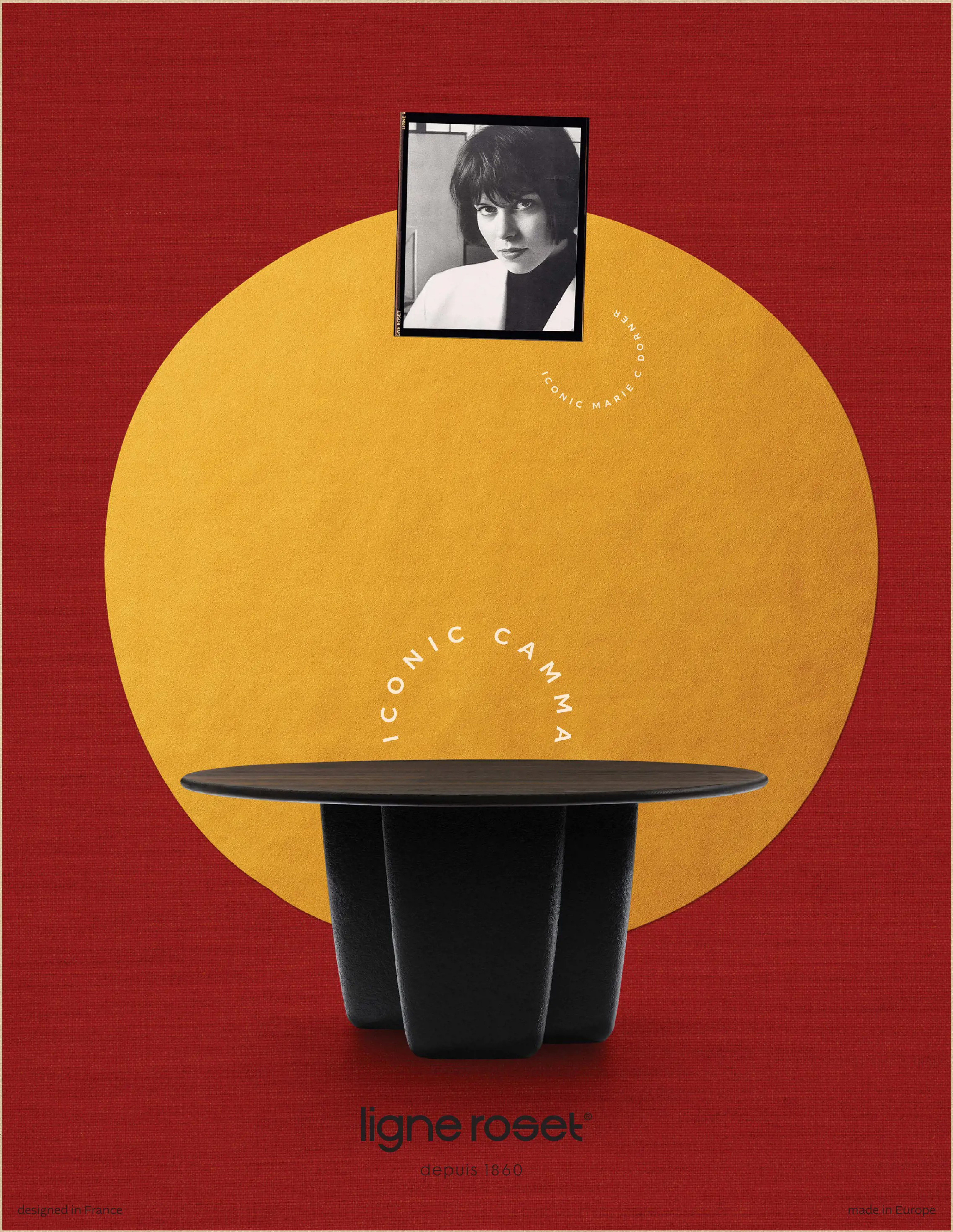
"In the timeline section, we have special highlights focusing specifically on Canadian design — from 19th-century Quebec through to the *L'École du meuble* movement and then the 1960s and Expo 67. But throughout every section, you're appreciating Canadian and Quebec design in an international context. The Shaping Mobility display includes one of Montreal's Bixi rental bikes, as well as amazing Indigenous cradleboards and a new kayak made by Inuit students in the Kativik Ilisarniliriniq school district of Nunavik. It shows how incredible design traditions have endured."

⑤ It All Comes Back Again

"The Past Forward section of the exhibition looks at reinterpretations of historical styles — like Alessandro Mendini's Poltrona di Proust, which covers this neo-baroque chair in a colourful contemporary pattern. There are new ways to approach design, but there are also old ways — and that conversation continues."

TOP: The exhibition's Cantilevered Modernism furniture display. ABOVE: The La Cova sofa by Gianni Ruffi. LEFT: A two-wheeler from Montreal's pioneering Bixi bike-share system.

PHOTOS BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS BRIÈRE (CHAIR WALL AND PORTRAIT); ALL COURTESY OF THE MMFA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Paris Design Week

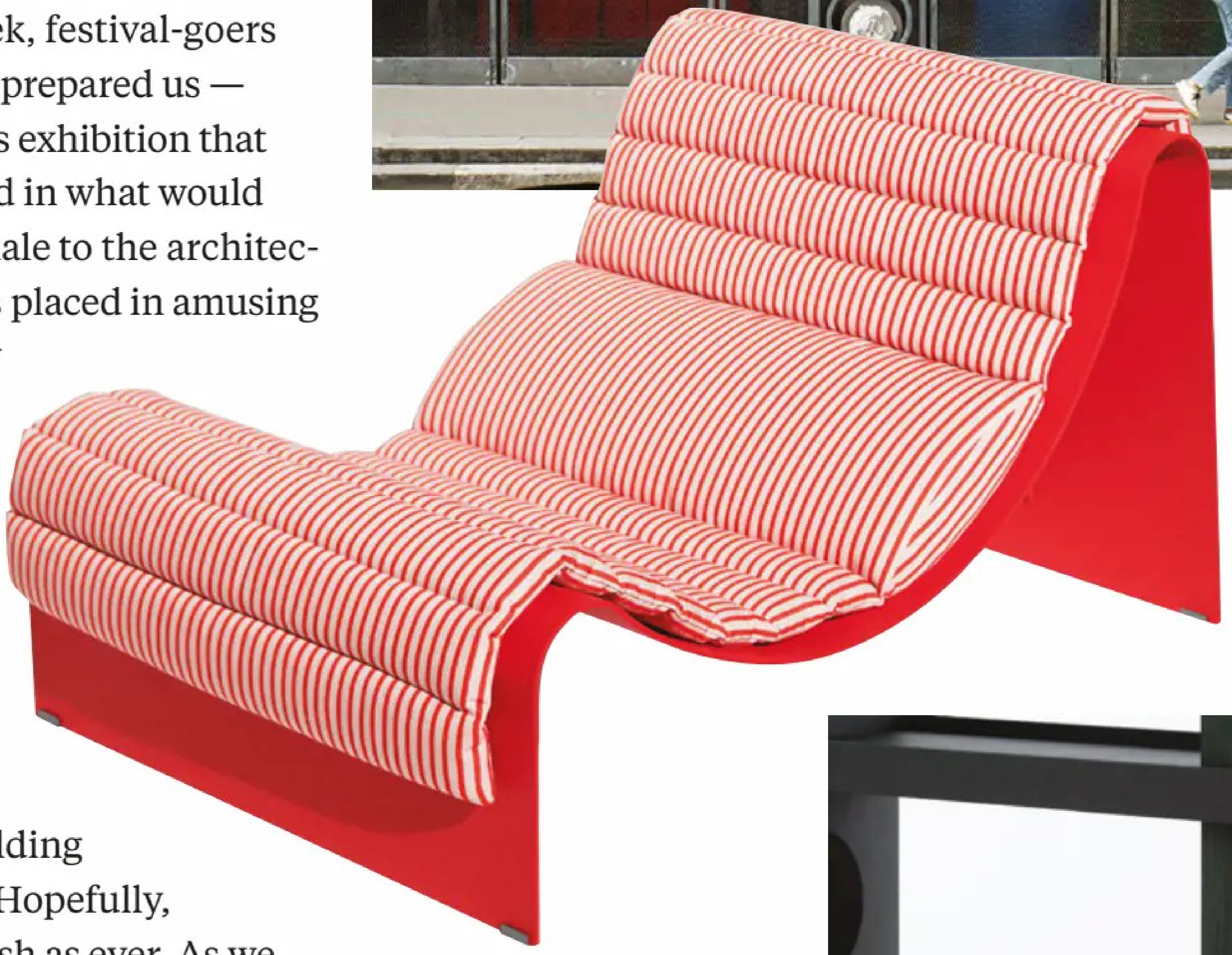
Infrastructure Upgrades

Gutsy furniture modelled after architecture's inner workings kept France's design festival operating like a well-oiled machine

by ERIC MUTRIE

ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER. As the Centre Pompidou prepares to close for a five-year restoration led by Moreau Kusunoki and Frida Escobedo, the inside-out spirit of the Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers building seems to be taking the Parisian creative scene by storm all over again.

During the city's September design week, festival-goers were eager to discuss "Nothing could have prepared us — Everything could have prepared us," the Wolfgang Tillmans exhibition that served as the Centre Pompidou's pre-reno swan song. Staged in what would normally be the museum's library, it was a monumental finale to the architectural landmark's first chapter, with many Tillmans photos placed in amusing relationship to their surroundings. In one corner, a splotchy abstract shot mirrored a stain on the floor below it, while in other areas, the building's striped carpeting and blue ceiling pipes became extensions of geometric elements found within nearby photos. Emptied of almost everything else — a banner in the desolate lobby declared "That's all folks" with an asterisk at the end — the rest of the Pompidou had the feeling of a recently decommissioned factory. Thankfully, there are no plans to start production on an entirely new model; instead, the 1977 building will simply be undergoing some necessary service repairs. Hopefully, the tubes and ducts that encase it will emerge feeling as fresh as ever. As we become more distrustful of modern tech's mysterious algorithms, which rarely reveal their moving parts, the radical candor of the late-1970s high-tech movement holds new appeal.



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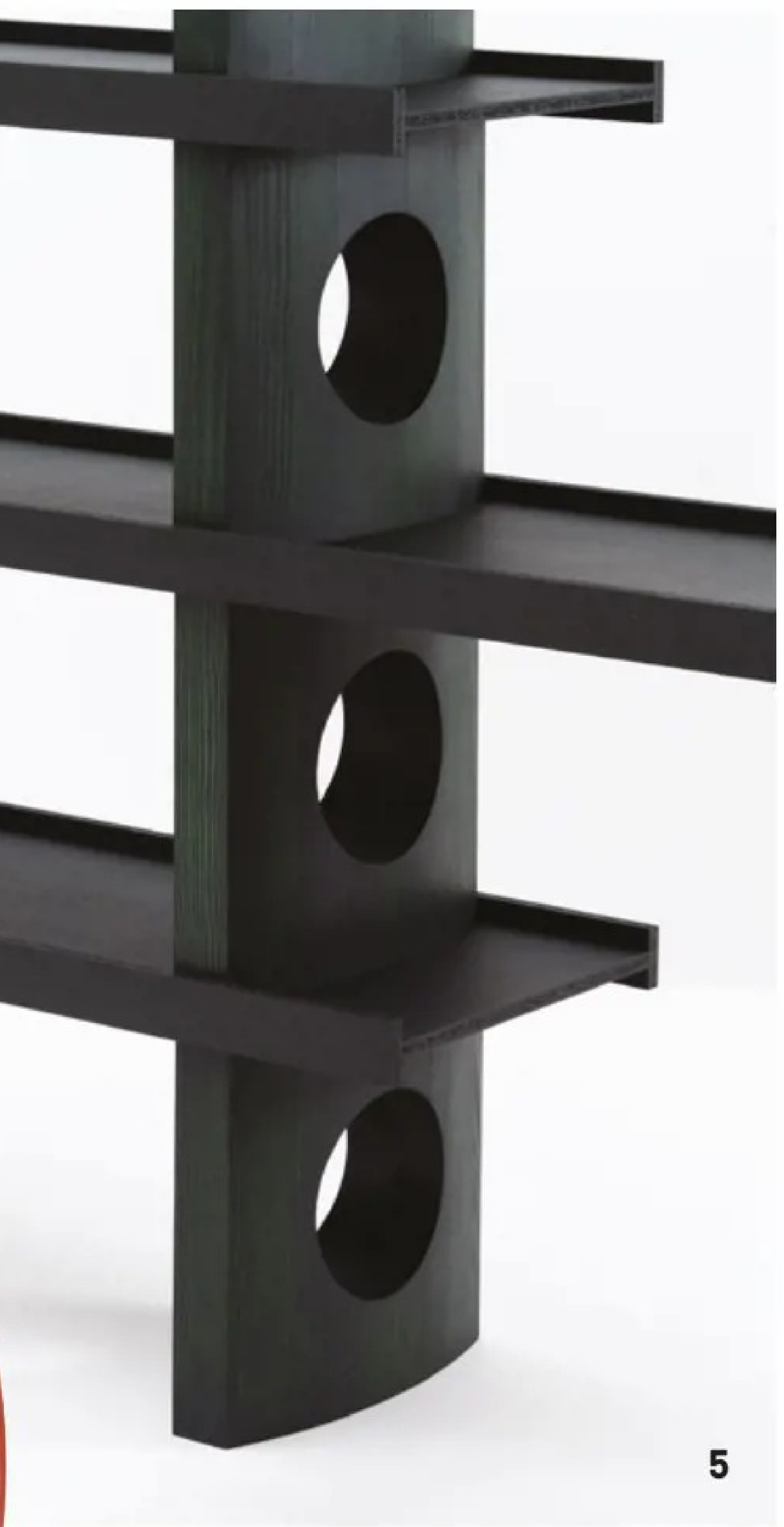
Many Paris Design Week participants seemed to agree. Several opted to place a design's functional components front and centre — as was the case with Stéven Coëffic's floor lamp **[1]** that affixed prominent, protruding ceramic shades to a simple wooden beam, or Petite Friture's aluminum-framed Eclipse daybed (by Garnier Pingree) **[2]**, which leaves little to the imagination when it comes to its construction. Meanwhile, seating and storage solutions brought a sense of playfulness to industrial forms normally found inside an engine room or at a construction site. At "Design Disco Club" — an avant-garde exhibition organized by local creative studio Pli Office to "rethink the relationship between industrial and human rhythms" — Moustache's Extra Bold sofa (by Big Game) **[3]** resembled rainbow-hued radiator coils, while Lambert & Fils expanded its Ipoli family with a crane-like swing-arm light **[4]**.

Exhibiting in Paris Design Week's Factory showcase of up-and-comers, the designers at Office Studio punctuated their modular Beam shelving with circular vent-like holes **[5]**. And at Maison&Objet, Parisian studio Hall Haus led the show's Design District with more hole-punched steel furniture **[6]**, while Heller launched a miniature version of its Swell catchall by Anna Dawson **[7]**. Rather than stashing on-the-go essentials in a drawer when you get home, why not put them on full display? Spill your guts — the Pompidou would be proud. AZ



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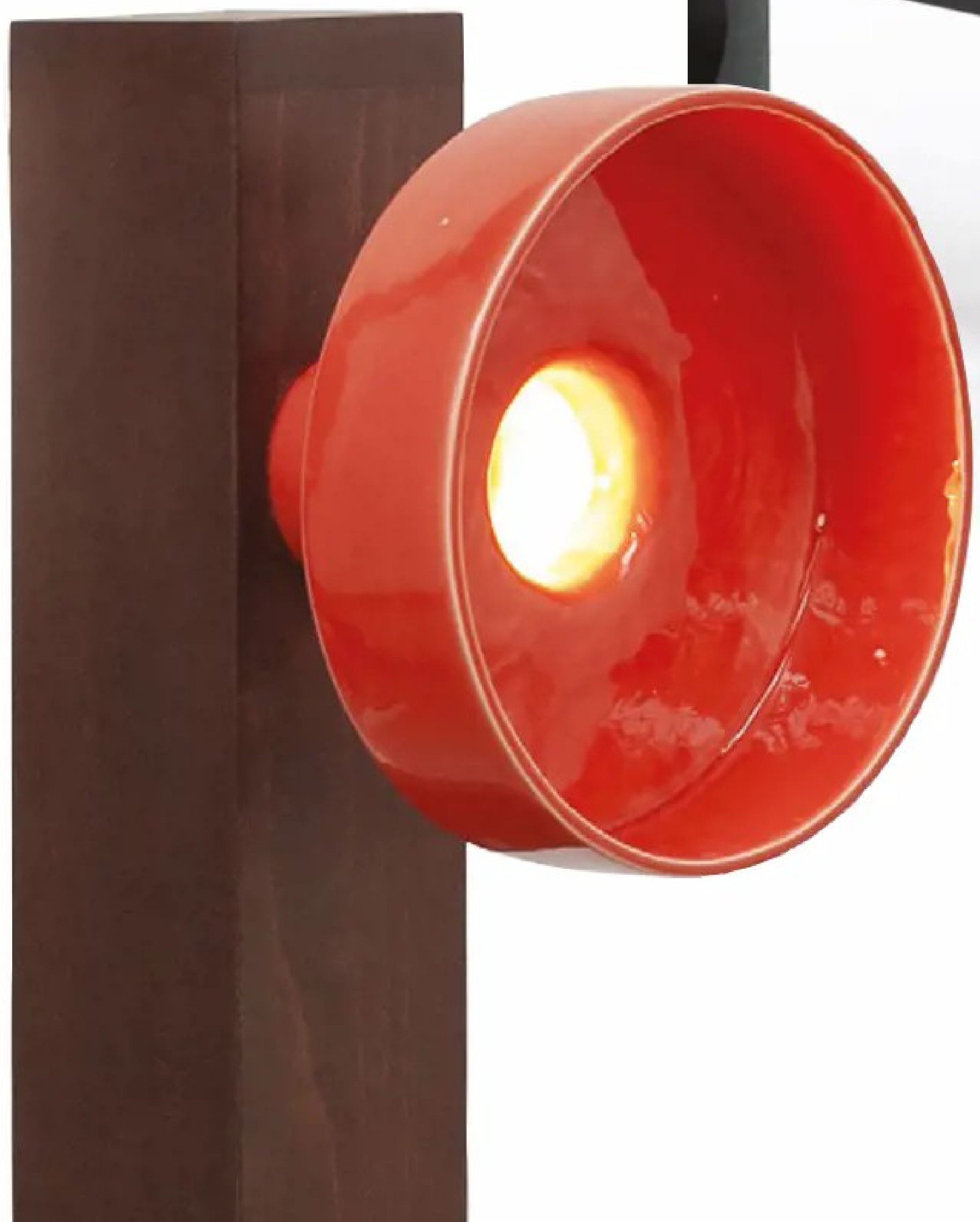

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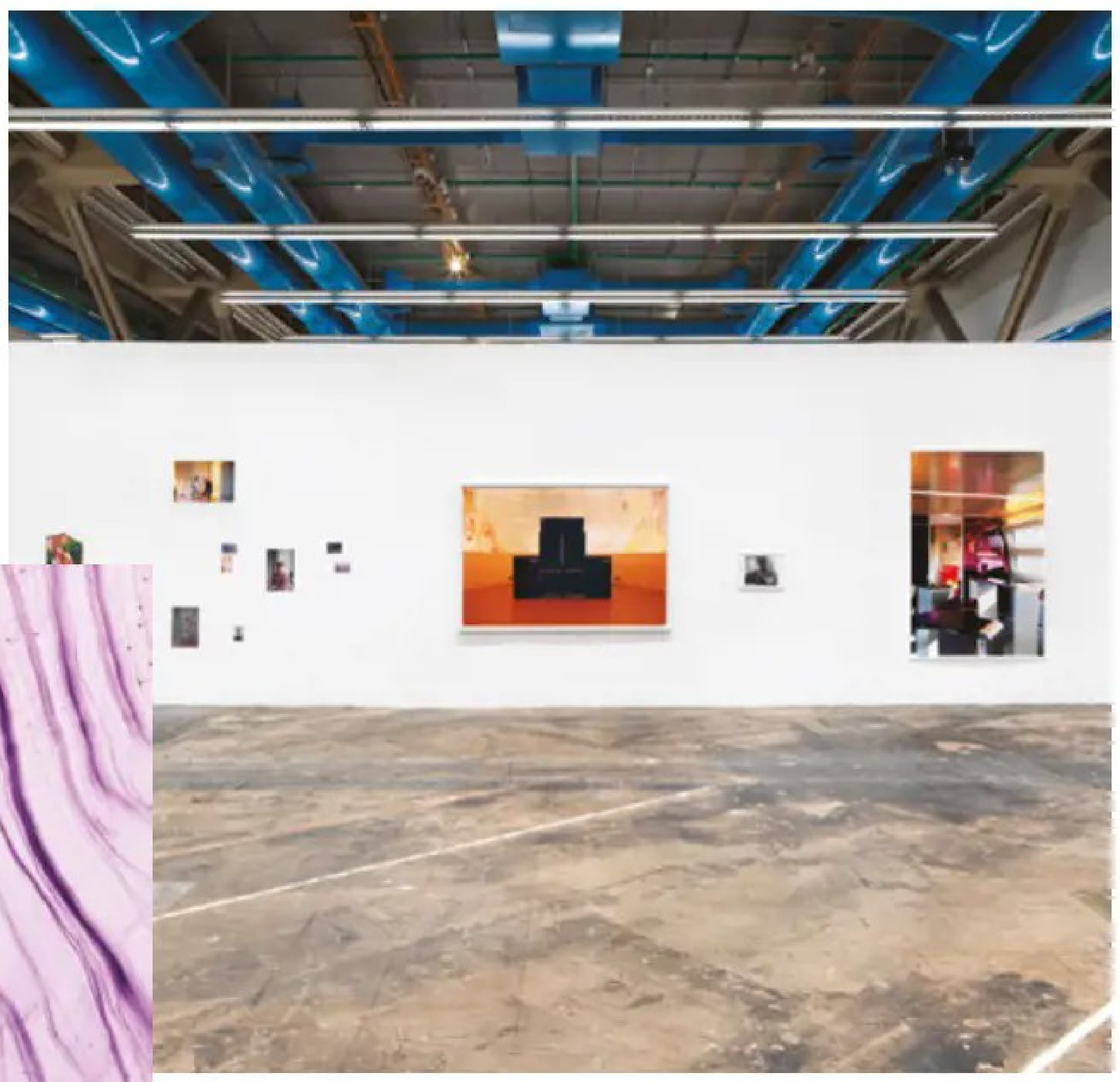

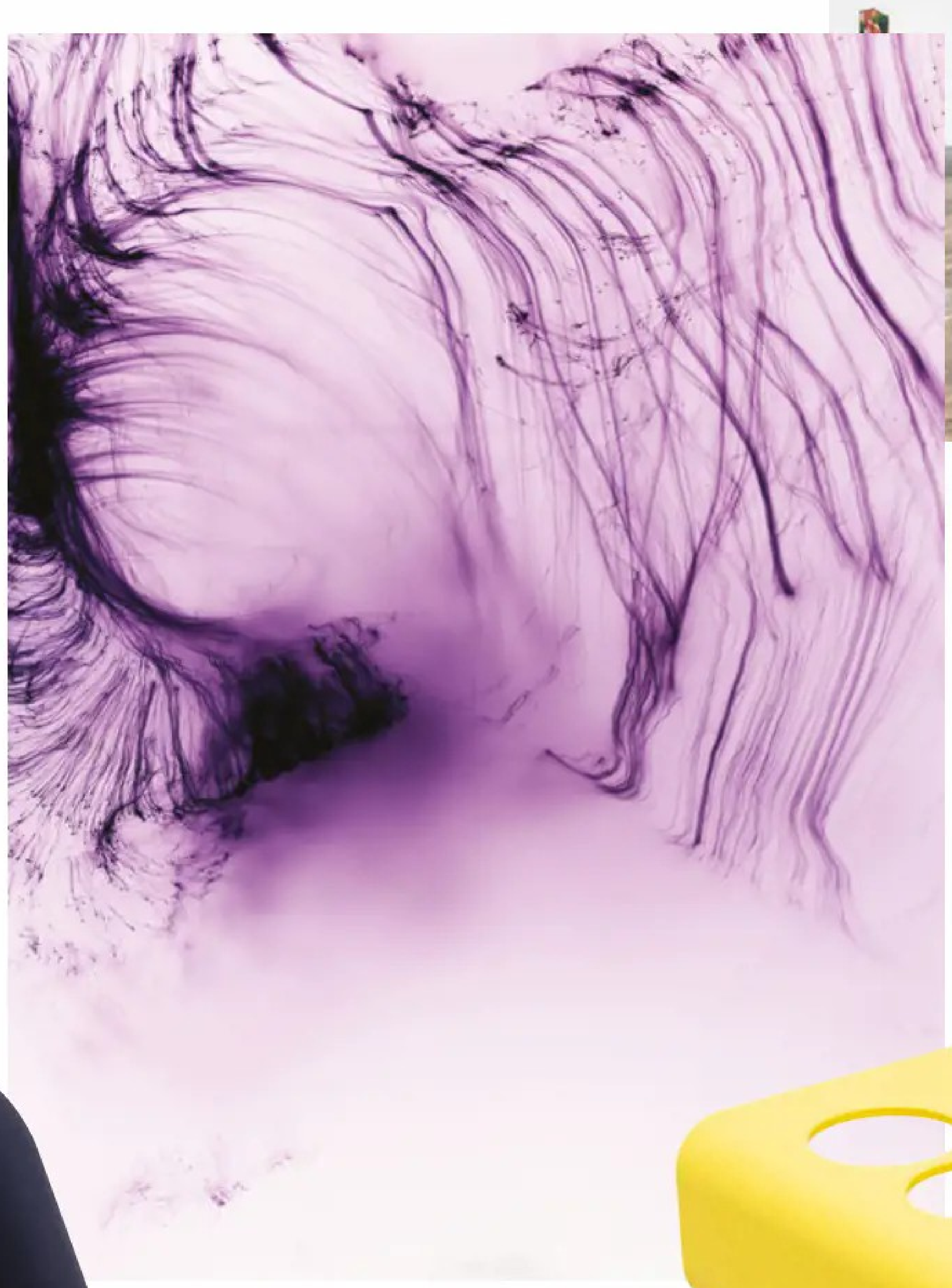

Just before the Centre Pompidou (far left) closes for a five-year retrofit, photographer Wolfgang Tillmans presented some 3,000 images, including *It's only love give it away* (left). The exhibition filled what would normally be the museum's library (above).

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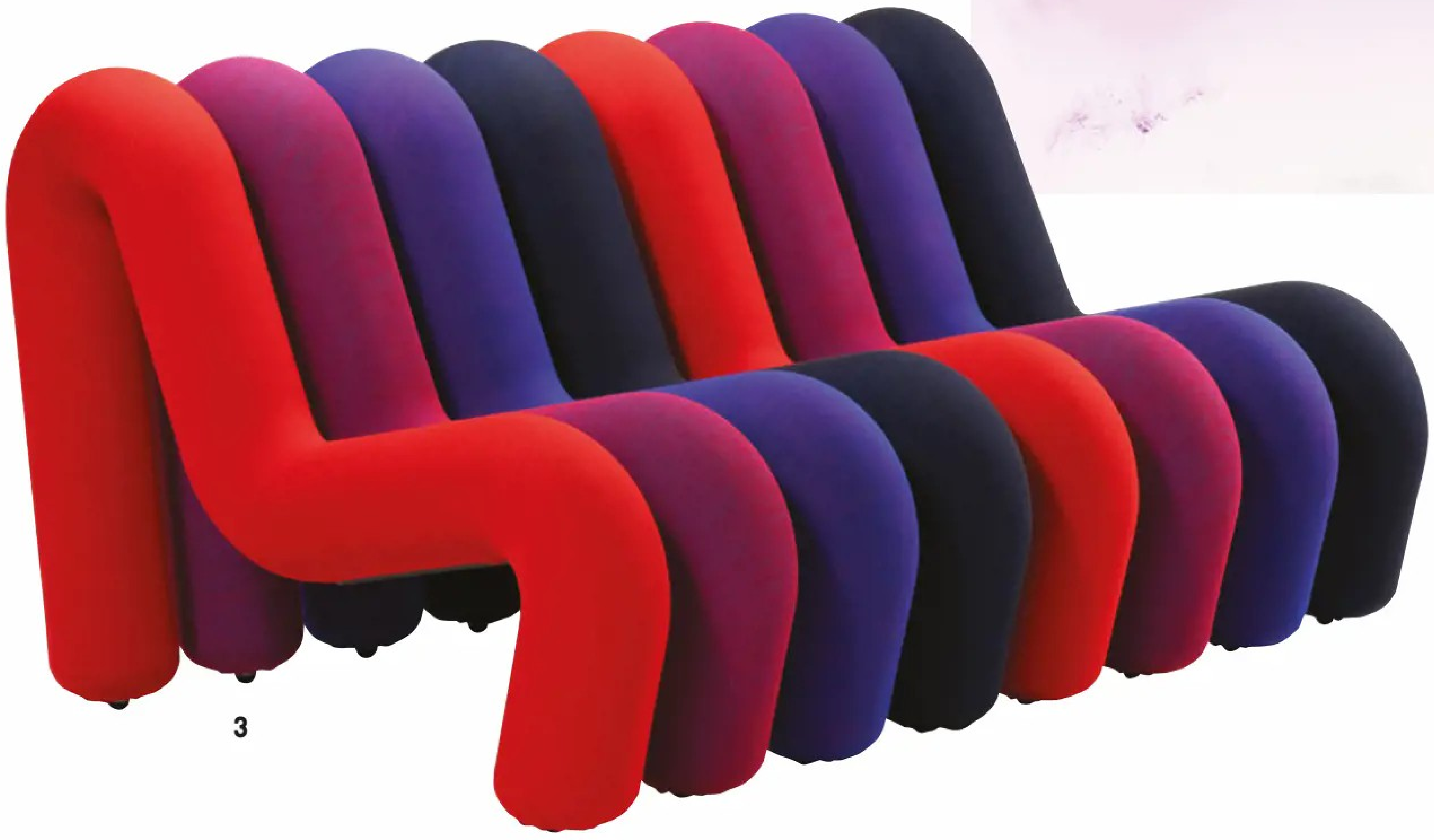

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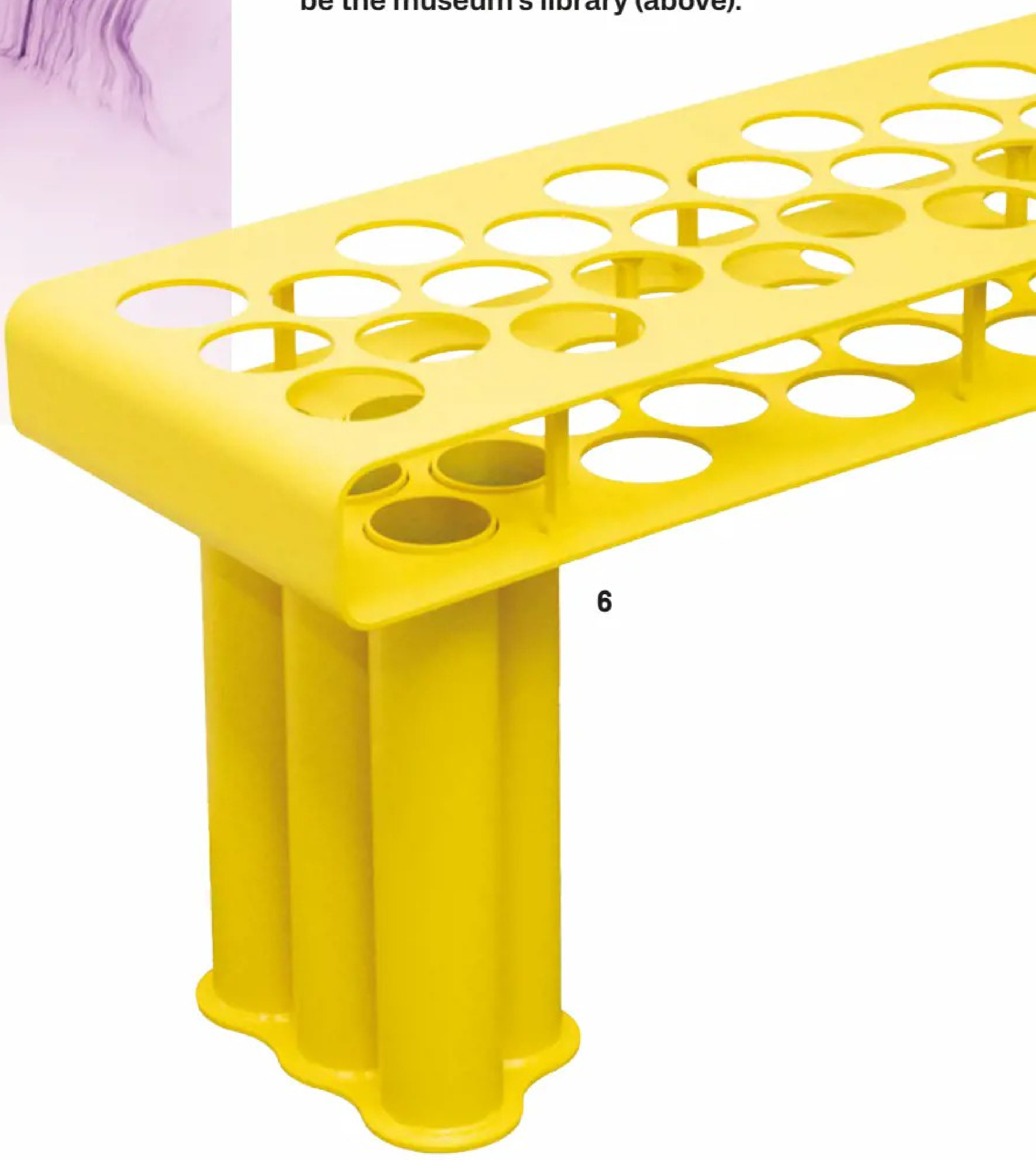

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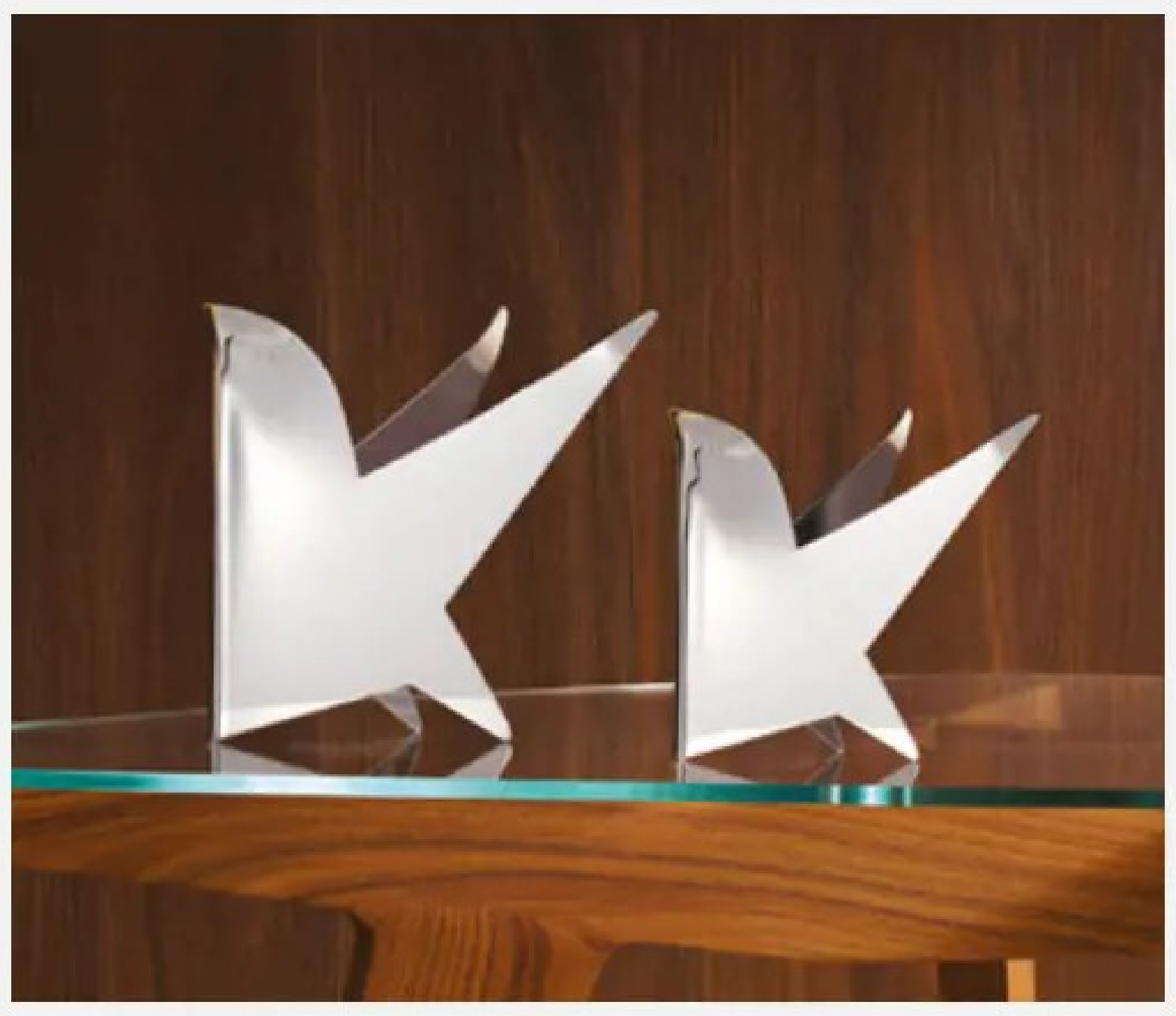
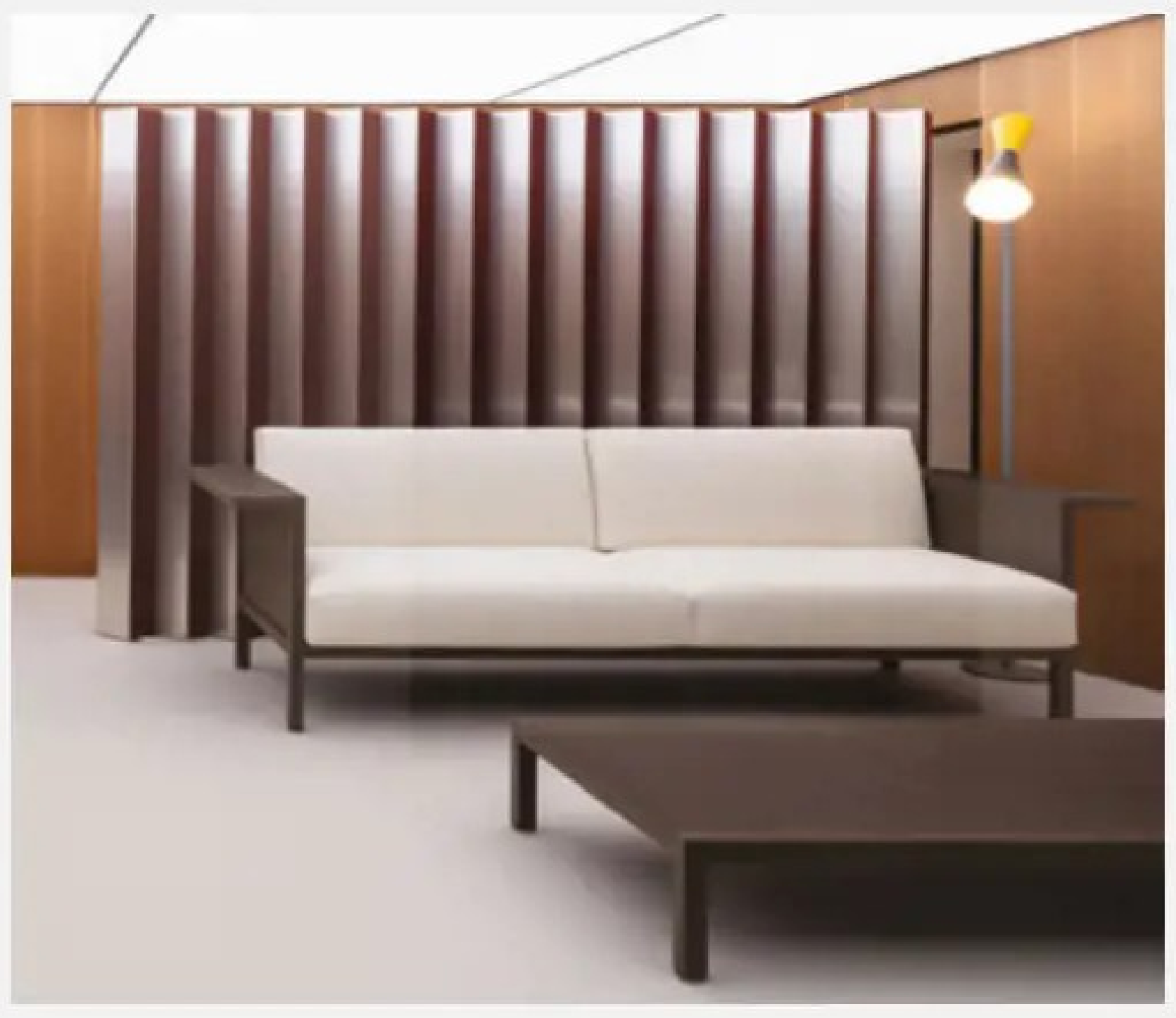
+ Très Elegant

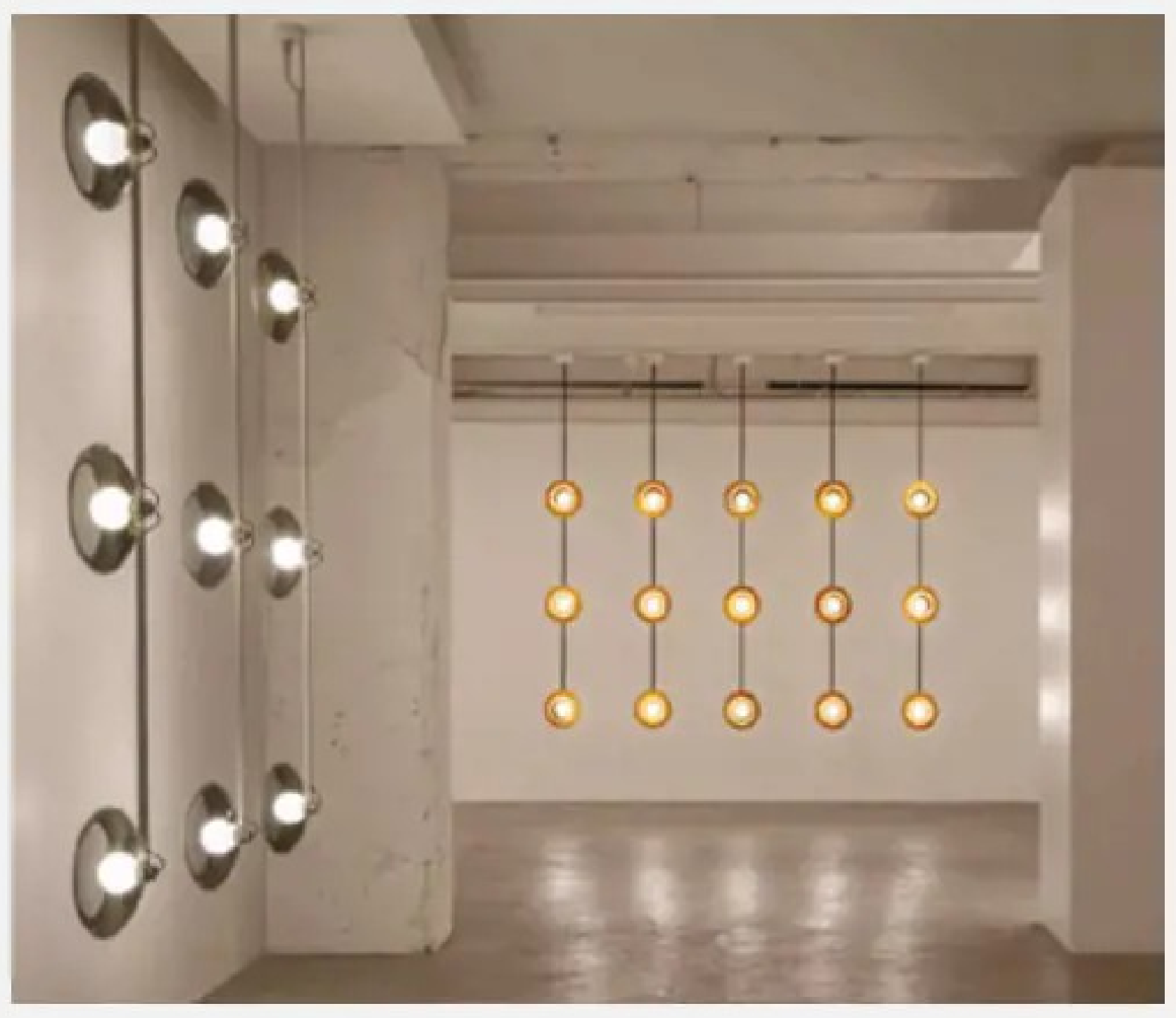
Three more Paris launches that appealed to the city's spirit of sophistication



1: **Molteni&C** showcased a collection of reissued objets designed by Gio Ponti, including a pair of folded sheet-metal bird sculptures (Colombo). Move over, Eames bird!



2: Snøhetta's modular Borealis collection for **Citterio** balances rigour with comfort, combining a linear oak frame with upholstered cushions.



3: At Galerie Kreo, **Ronan Bouroullec** presented "Clair-obscur," an exhibition of light sculptures that strike a balance between his design and art practices.

Chef d’Oeuvre

Gaggenau’s portfolio of luxury appliances is a culinary masterpiece

The company’s professional-grade cooktops are considered down to the details, from intuitive controls to powerful downdraft ventilation.

When it comes to product development, even the most seasoned designer cannot rival the first-hand experience of the end user. So in the realm of appliances, who better to turn to than the world’s most exacting professionals: chefs? For Gaggenau, an ongoing dialogue with the culinary industry’s brightest minds has shaped a world-class portfolio of kitchen appliances, introducing professional-grade standards and accuracy into the home. From ovens that bring state-of-the-art steam cooking to residential settings to cooktops designed for absolute control, every detail reflects the rigour and creativity of the chefs who inspire them.

Founded more than 340 years ago, the German heritage brand has established a reputation for engineering precision and innovation. What began as a humble metalworks grew to manufacture appliances in the early 20th century, eventually pioneering built-in appliances in the mid-century and revolutionizing the design of modern kitchens. The Bauhaus influences of that time are reflected in Gaggenau’s logo, which endures today as a symbol of the company’s “form follows function” ethos.

Today, Gaggenau continues to push the boundaries, launching refrigerators outfitted with cutting-edge cooling technology and ranges with next-generation digital interfaces. But through the years, the company has remained uncompromising in its commitment to artisanal craft. “We do things a certain way, not to impress or differentiate but because that is what is required to achieve perfection,” explains Gaggenau’s head of design, Sven Baacke.

At Gaggenau’s Montreal showroom, a team of appliance experts offers custom consultations in an elevated setting.

Many of the company’s appliances are still assembled by hand and meticulously examined by an expert craftsperson at every stage of production. The result is unparalleled quality that must be experienced first-hand (including at showrooms across Canada, in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver).

Gaggenau recognizes that, much like the iterative process of perfecting a recipe, appliance design is both a science and an art. The company’s values of craftsmanship, heritage and performance are expressed through products that are intuitive to use and timeless in form and design. With a suite of refined, clean-lined appliances that blend seamlessly into contemporary interiors, Gaggenau conceives of its products as an extension of architecture, redefining the kitchen as not just a workspace but a hub of gastronomy and design. ***gaggenau.ca***

Gifts for... The Urbanist

Set them up to conquer their studio commute by hitting the pavement in austere architectural style (meaning, yes, all black)

by ERIC MUTRIE

6
snow peak
800
titanium

1. PROTONE HELMET
Avid cyclist Paul Smith teamed up with the safety pros at **Kask** for this monochromatic, made-in-Italy head protection featuring washable padding. $455

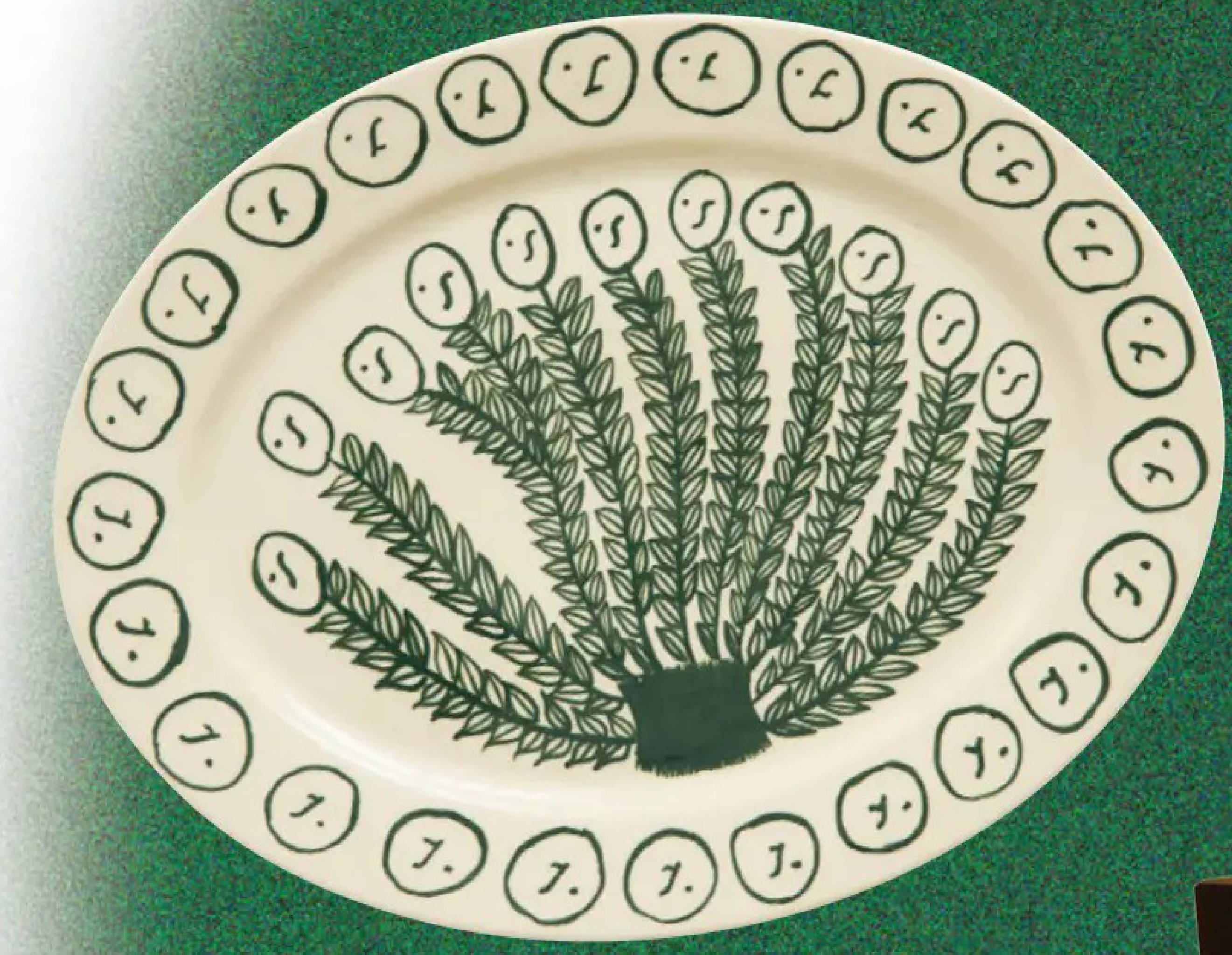
2. 001A TRAIL SHOES
Montreal running brand **Norda** recently revamped its flagship footwear with a new midsole while maintaining the design's rugged, technical appeal. $295

3. HAUS TOOLBOX
Keep bike tools, birdwatching binoculars or other gear in order with **Normann Copenhagen**'s pitched-roof, steel-and-ash caddy by Hannes & Fritz. $115

4. CONVEYOR BELT
Accessorize everything from steel-toe boots to boardroom suits with this industrial-chic **Arc'teryx** band featuring thick webbing and a metal buckle. $60

5. PAIR CANDLE HOLDER
Designed by Norway's Lars Tornøe, **Muuto**'s anodized aluminum centrepieces come in varying heights to form a Scandinavian skyline in miniature. FROM $75

6. AURORA WATER BOTTLE
A photo of **Snow Peak**'s titanium flask currently serves as Lorde's Instagram profile picture — and keeping a touring pop star hydrated is no easy feat. $210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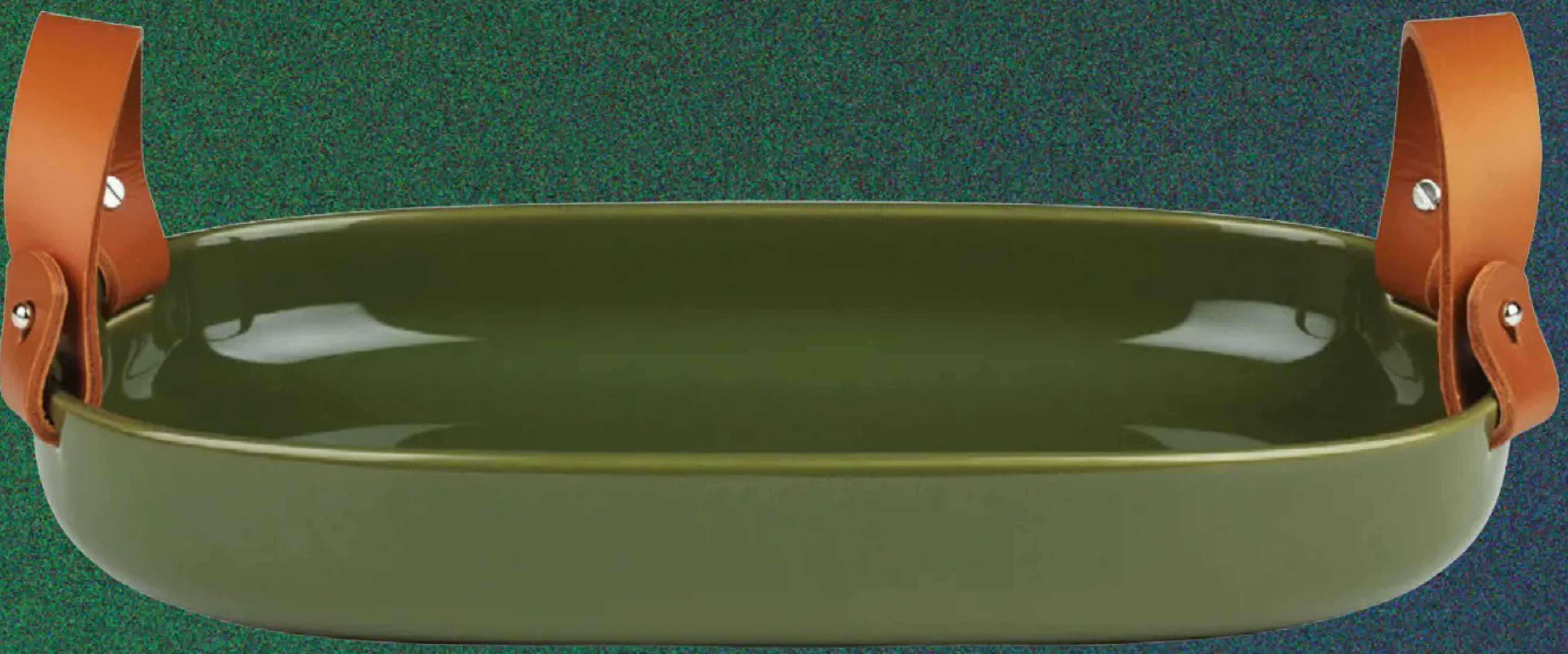
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Gifts for... The Hospitality Expert

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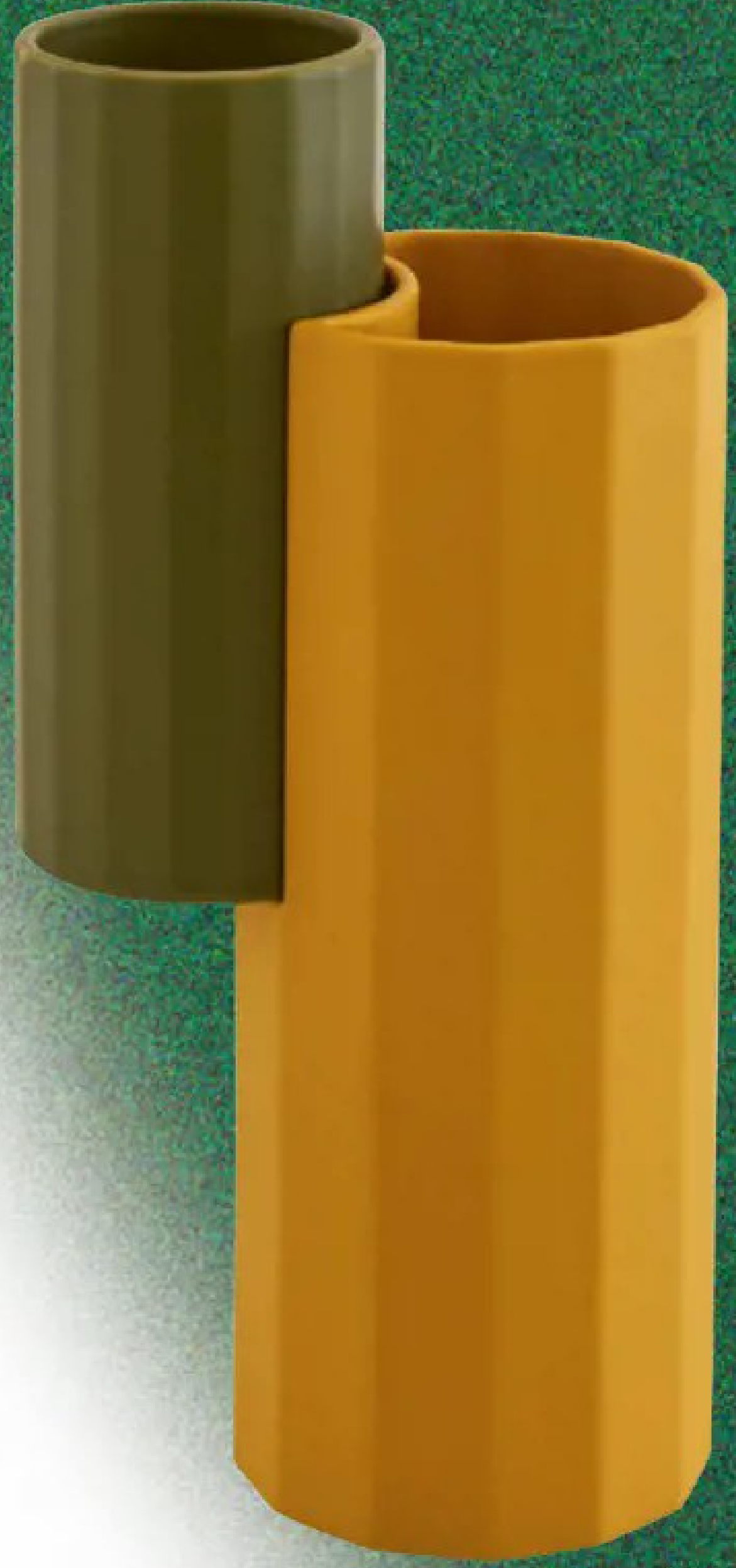
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They might specialize in evenings out, but every now and then, even a restaurant designer appreciates the value of dining in

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1. OLIVE GROVE PLATTER
Artist Emma Kohlmann drew from Renaissance ceramics to design **Hay**'s new series of modern servingware, all hand-painted in Sri Lanka. $135

2. ISO KOPPA PLATTER
Wide leather handles bring a rustic warmth to Sami Ruotsalainen's generously proportioned **Marimekko** serving dish coated with a dark green glaze. $240

3. DALIA VASE
Alice Rosignoli imagined **Ligne Roset**'s fluted enamelled earthenware vase as a "two in one" affair that allows for elegantly tiered arrangements. $765

4. GATHERED TABLEWARE
Herman Miller played sous-chef to **Heath Ceramics** to cook up a range of made-in-California dishes offered in a mix of earthy, harvest-season hues. FROM $45

5. LA COUPOLE CAKE STAND
Fabio Novembre looked to the domed cathedrals that anchor many Italian cities to develop **Kartell**'s plastic centrepiece for showing off sweets. US$220 each

6. YUCATAN AND OAXACA SPICE MILLS
Michele De Lucchi's hand-cranked brown beech grinders for **Alessi** take their sculptural cues from Aztec symbols and architecture. $190 each

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Gifts for... The Power Clasher

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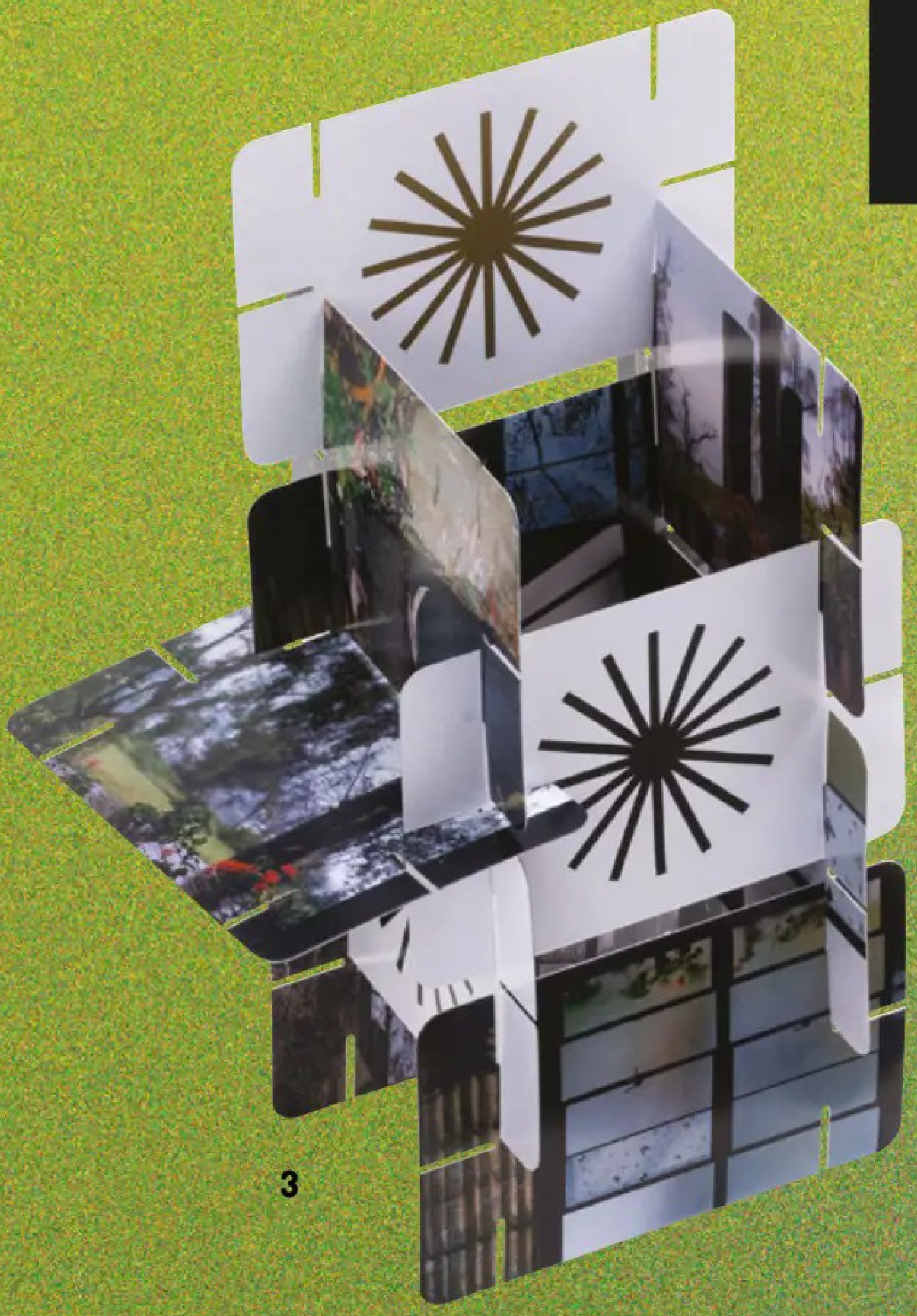
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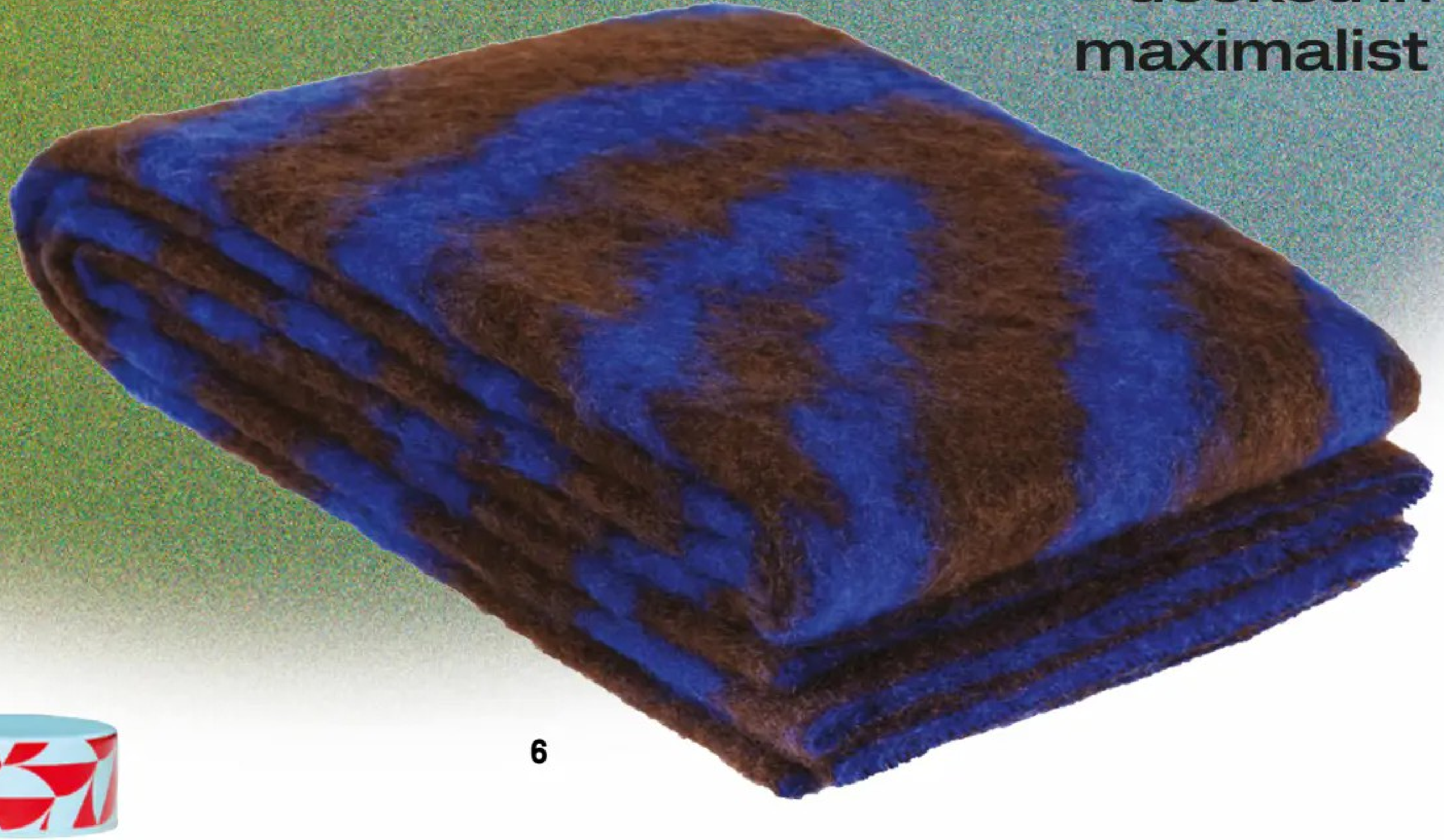
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1. HAVANA TEAPOT
Deliver a burst of energy — even if you're just serving decaf — with the bright stripes of this dishwasher-safe porcelain design by **Remember**. US$85

2. CROMATICA CUSHION
Flower appliqués add texture to **Roche Bobois**'s pillow inspired by the flamboyant cinematography of Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar. $290

3. HOUSE OF CARDS
Mark the 75th anniversary of L.A.'s Eames House with **Eames Office**'s deck of interlocking cards featuring photos of the home shot by Charles and Ray. US$30

4. JEFF SUNGLASSES
Eyewear god **Jacques Marie Mage** named these fab zebra-print frames after Jeff Goldblum, just one of his many celeb fans. They're limited to 500 pairs. $1,400

5. PATTERN THERMAL FLASK
Keep coffee hot (or lemonade cold) for at least 12 hours in **Areaware**'s stainless steel–lined travel mug, decorated with geometric flair by Dusen Dusen. US$40 each

6. MONSTER THROW
Stockholm artist and illustrator Siri Carlén turns imaginary beasts into a source of real-world comfort with **Hem**'s 180-by-130-centimetre mohair blanket. $550

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Going Mobile

Herzog & de Meuron and Piet Oudolf place architecture, landscaping and Alexander Calder's beloved sculptures into shared orbit

by JOANN GRECO

PHILADELPHIANS HAVE LONG HAD a love–hate relationship with the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, a one-mile axis that runs from City Hall to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It may be leafy and lined with cultural landmarks, but its eight traffic lanes make it difficult to cross on foot, and it suffers from patches of undeveloped land — not to mention a dearth of places to stop for a drink. Around 2012, a few new parks, cafés and attractions opened, including the relocated and expanded Barnes Foundation, an elegant limestone rectangle from Tod Williams Billie Tsien set inside a formal landscape by OLIN. But the move for “more park, less way” has languished since then.

Now, on the other side of the boulevard, celebrated plantsman Piet Oudolf and architects Herzog & de Meuron have unveiled Calder Gardens, which will display an ever-changing assemblage of gossamer mobiles and monumental sculptures by Alexander “Sandy” Calder, who was born in Lawnton, Pennsylvania back in 1898 and raised in Philadelphia. The gallery lands on one of those formerly threadbare patches, and presents a seamless addition to an already remarkable trio of sculptures (known as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost) found on the Parkway: Alexander Milner Calder’s 1894

photos by IWAN BAAN

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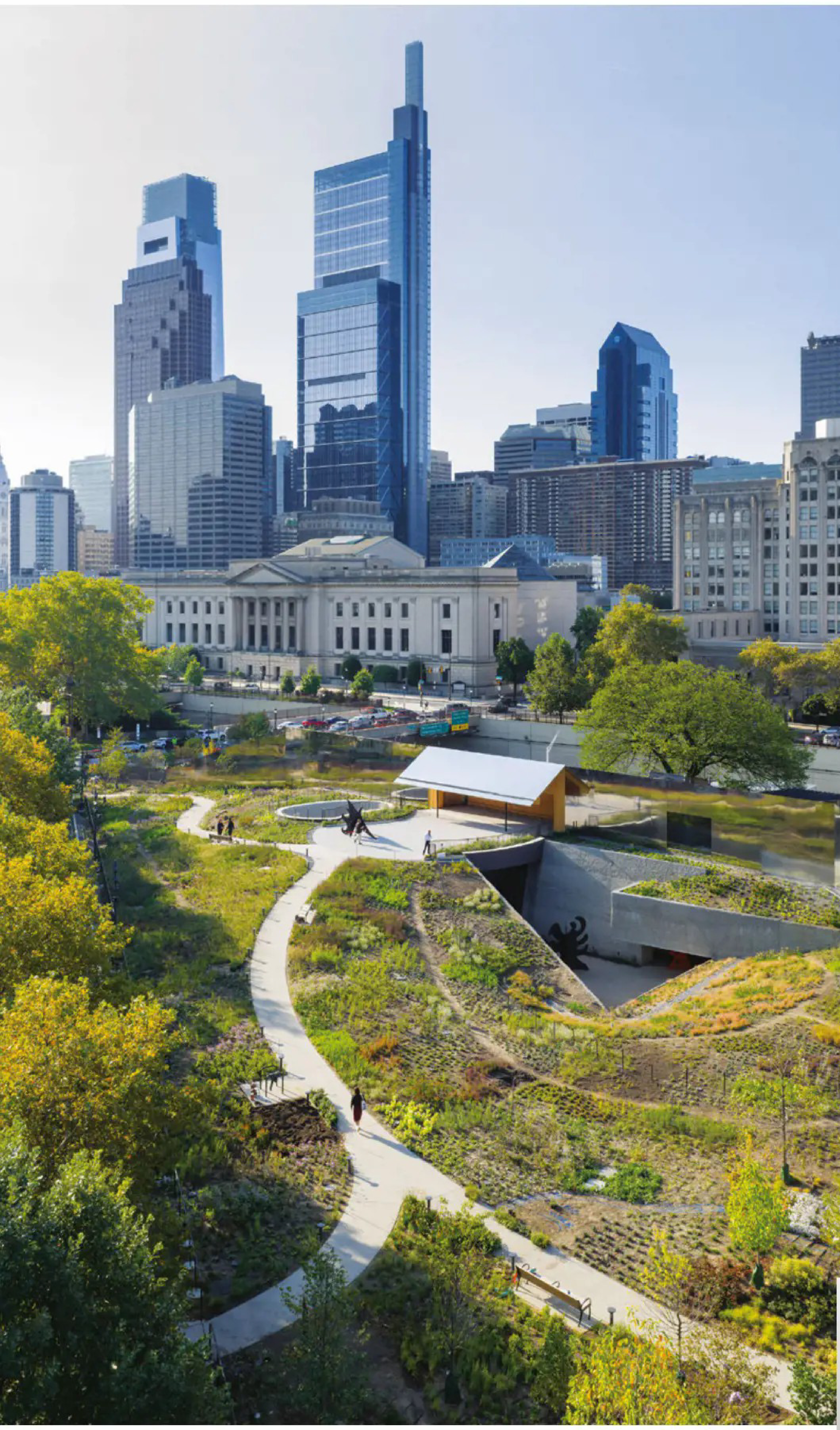


statue of William Penn on top of City Hall, *Swann Memorial Fountain* (1924) by his son Alexander Stirling Calder at Logan Square and, at the furthest end of the Parkway, Sandy's *The Ghost* (1964), suspended above the grand staircase of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

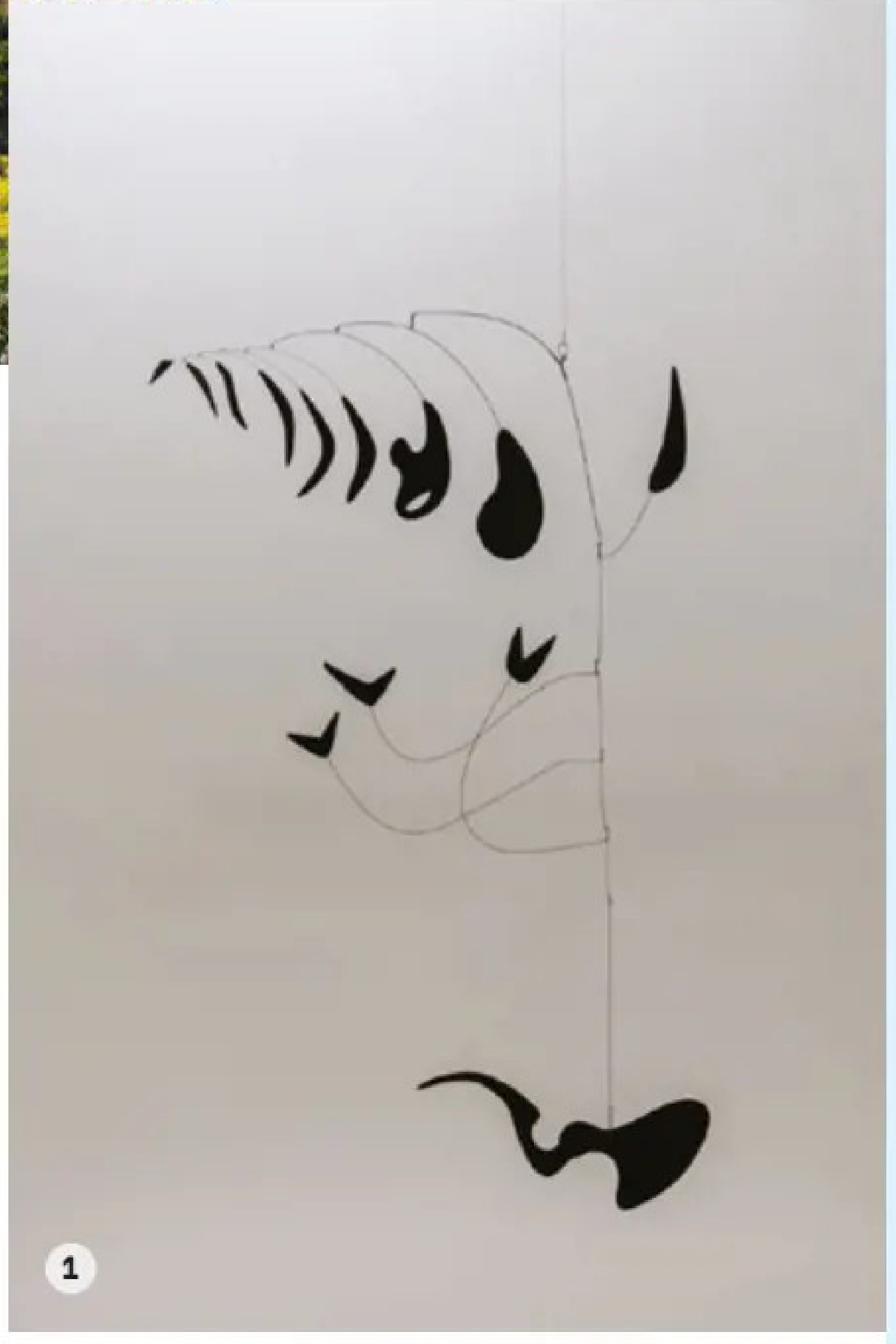
During a ribbon-cutting ceremony in mid-September, Alexander S.C. Rower, grandson of the artist and president of the New York–based Calder Foundation, which initiated the project, noted he presented no brief to its architects, simply asking, "Can you imagine spaces that can hold different works at various times of the year?" Jacques Herzog in turn praised the "blank canvas" of this broad mandate. "The beginning," he said, "was just to understand the site."

Some of the resulting design decisions were made in response to discoveries along the way. A 1910 map of the street grid and buildings that were demolished to create the Parkway informed the shape of one of the site's sunken gardens, while downtown flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida led to raising the building by two feet. With their low-slung, sunlit structure, the architects impel visitors to reach the galleries deeper underground by means of sneak peeks and surprising paths that play with space, stillness and materiality. The ground level waits behind a trapezoidal wall sheathed in softly reflective stainless steel (paired with a metallic canopy over the porchlike entrance). This gives way as one enters to subterranean galleries clad in warm terrazzo stone, scored hemlock wood and blackened shotcrete that looks like lava — not exactly the concerns of colour, form and movement typically associated with Calder.

On the other hand, Rower turned to Oudolf specifically for his command of those elements. The Dutch master delivered with a variety of gardens — woodlands, meadows, sunken and prairie — filled with flowering perennials, shrubs and trees that will morph with the seasons, from spring bulbs to summer-into-fall blooms to the winter interest provided by seeds, pods and branches. Neither Calder's work nor Herzog & de Meuron's building drove Oudolf's design. "For me, it's always all about the plants," he says. Maybe, but to find three creative geniuses working in concert in two tiny acres makes for one complete work of art. AZ

ABOVE: The trapezoidal reflective wall that defines Herzog & de Meuron's building marks a modern contrast to the Classical Revival architecture of the neighbouring Franklin Institute science museum.

BELOW: Concrete-and-wood-clad subterranean galleries showcase rotating artworks while offering views to additional sculptures stationed among Piet Oudolf's meadowlike landscape.

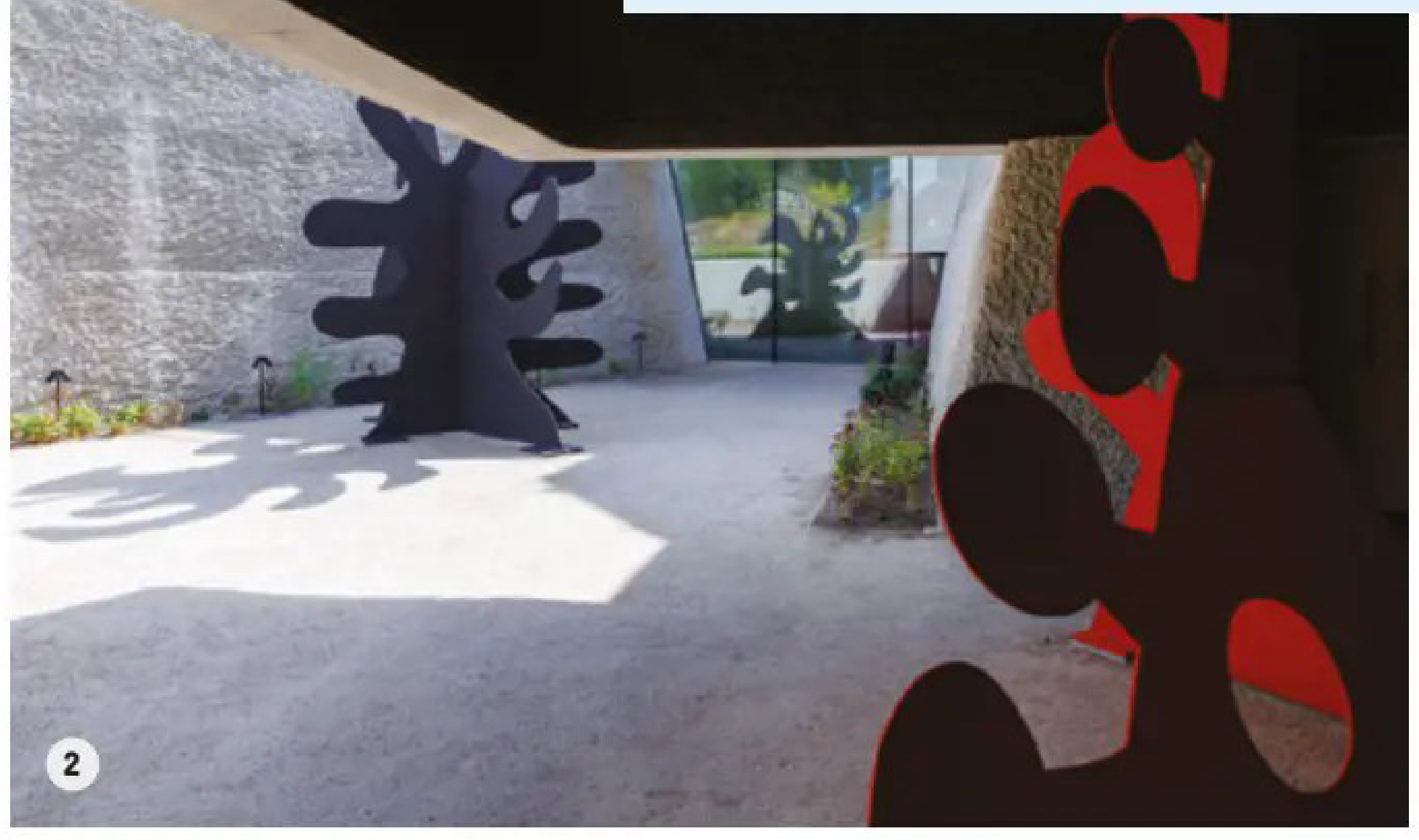


GEOMETRY 101

Neither a museum nor a sculpture garden (works are predominantly inside and presented with no context, labels or biographical sketches), Calder Gardens offers a host of magical set pieces

1. ***Eucalyptus*** **(1940)**
One of several works that gets its own niche, this mobile cascades from way up high and is lit in a Turrellian fashion that almost makes you doubt its solidity.

2. ***Knobs*** **(1976) and *Tripes*** **(1974)**
One red, one black, these sculptures pair off in the Vestige Garden, an outdoor space accessible from the inside. Both this area and the Sunken Garden will eventually be draped in vines, including wisteria, climbing hydrangea, honeysuckle and clematis.



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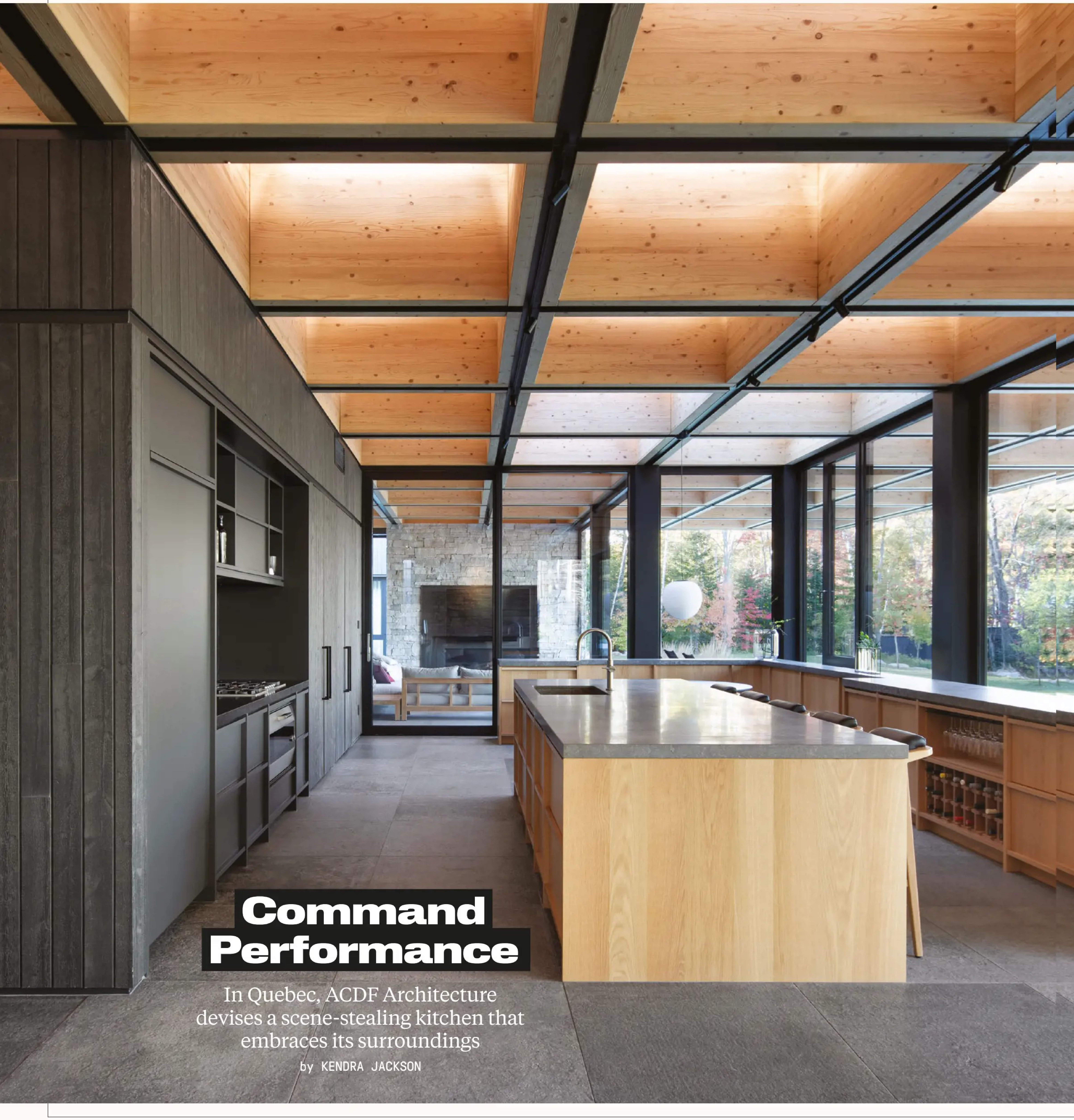
KITCHEN

Two kitchens that emphasize a connection to the outdoors, top-notch systems for al fresco dining and the latest multi-mode cooking appliances



Command Performance

In Quebec, ACDF Architecture devises a scene-stealing kitchen that embraces its surroundings

by KENDRA JACKSON

edited by
KENDRA JACKSON

OPEN TO THE OUTSIDE, but protected and sheltered. Expansive, but humble and unobtrusive on the land. These were the seemingly incongruous directives ACDF Architecture was given for a new-build chalet along the shore of Lac Archambault, near Mont-Tremblant, Quebec. In response, the firm delivered a low-slung, glass-wrapped marvel that creates a harmonious relationship with its surroundings, dissolving transitions through well-orchestrated architectural gestures and a restrained material palette.

The home's defining feature is a massive coffered glulam roof structure organized in a 1.5-by-1.5-metre grid, a framework that is repeated in the floor plan to create a pleasing rhythm of rooms that open to one another in a fluid and intuitive manner, delineated only by subtle material changes. "As in many concertos where the first violin introduces the melody, here the ceiling takes on that role," says ACDF lead designer Maxime Frappier of the horizontal plane that unifies the interiors with a graphic clarity and a "controlled composition" that continues to the exterior with an up to 4.5-metre cantilevered extension.

In the centrally located kitchen, this melodic idea is expressed through an orderly design that is at once comforting and calm and highly functional. A large white oak island topped with a natural grey stone counter provides a generous workstation and is augmented by a longer matching cabinet that runs the length of the windows and wraps around one corner of the room, including a dining nook with built-in leather-upholstered bench seating; baguette-shaped profiles with integrated handles lend the flat-faced units dimension and interest. Behind the island, a black-stained cedar box contains the appliances (a secondary kitchenette behind this serves as a butler's pantry with room for countertop appliances and additional food and servingware storage), creating a moody counterpoint to the paler wood. Smooth-faced local limestone floor tiles introduce a new texture, one that is echoed on a series of stone walls that dot the interior, supporting the coffered system and further blurring the line between indoors and outdoors. Enveloping the entire room are full-height windows that offer views of the surrounding forest and lake — and beautifully deliver on the client's request for a home that feels at one with the outdoors.

LEFT: In this ACDF-designed chalet, the coffered roof features integrated linear LEDs that illuminate and accentuate the wood's grain and acoustic panels that contribute to the home's overall sense of intimacy and calm.

RIGHT: Subtle material shifts throughout indicate transitions from space to space. In the dining room, smooth limestone floor tiles meet a rough-faced stone pathway that leads to another section of the house.

photos by ADRIEN WILLIAMS

● CANOSSA OUTDOOR

Designed with a compositional rigour to emphasize purity of form, the Canossa outdoor kitchen by Ballabeni & Catellani Studio for **SCIC Italia** is a modular system that includes elements made from cast brass, stone, metal and wood that can be combined to create perfectly tailored cooking set-ups. Sleek metal and brass detailing highlight the brand's adherence to quality artisanal craftsmanship, while the built-in AEG range with an intuitive interface maximizes functionality and enhances the overall experience.

Food Stations

Turn backyards into al fresco dining destinations with outdoor kitchens that pack performance into a stunning form

by KENDRA JACKSON

● 48″ SERIES 9 GRILL

The generous hood of the 48″ Series 9 Grill from **DCS** can accommodate extra-large items when closed and is easily opened to a full 90 degrees with only one hand. With a secondary cooking space (big enough for a broiling pan), a charcoal smoker with gas-flame ignition, and optional built-in storage for racks, grates and tools, the outdoor grill meets the highest of demands. Bezel-illuminated dials that glow white (when on) or orange (when at work) enhance the overall aesthetic.

● SERIES 02

Outerspace, the new outdoor kitchen brand from Port Coquitlam, BC-based Green Theory, debuted with two fully realized systems, Series 01 and Series 02 (shown). Both feature robust material options — stainless steel, powder-coated aluminum in a range of colours and exterior-grade laminate — and an array of modules in standard or customized sizing. Grills, induction cooktops, fridges, sinks and more can be integrated into the design along with pull-out garbage drawers, open or closed storage, and prep surfaces.

● CUBE

Officially launched at KBIS 2025, CUBE was devised for **Brown Jordan** by Italian designer Luca Nichetto as an architecturally inspired system defined by stainless-steel modules in distinct shapes and eye-catching monochromatic or contrasting colours. Flush end and side panels provide a seamless appearance while soft-close doors and nested drawer interiors can be finished in brushed stainless steel or wood grain powder coat. Grill top, trash, sink and refrigerator cabinets can be incorporated into the layout.

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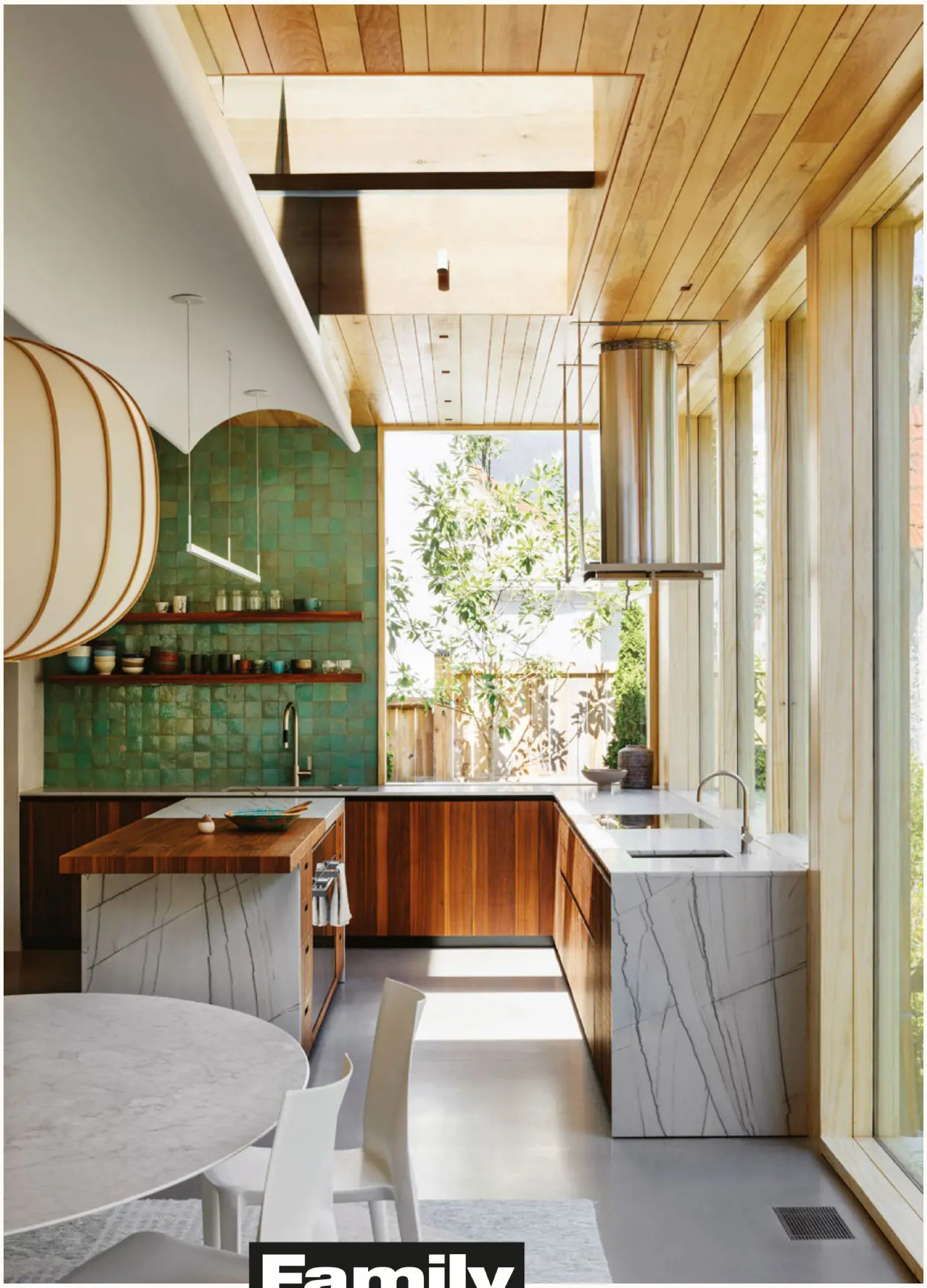
photos by JENNIFER HUGHES



Family Matters

A renovation of a historic home infuses the kitchen with a strong connection to the outdoors and a practical kid-friendly layout

by KENDRA JACKSON

COLLEEN HEALEY ARCHITECTURE devised this light-filled jewel box of a kitchen as part of an extensive renovation of a historic American Foursquare home in Washington, DC, for a young family who had recently returned after six years living in Japan. The family wanted a space that prioritized kid-friendly functionality and unfettered access to the outdoors — with an expressive mix of materials inspired by their experience living abroad.

As with many historical renovations, this one came with its fair share of challenges, most notably the original upper-storey sleeping porches that had to be retained, per regulations. Positioned directly above the kitchen (itself a 1980s addition that architect Colleen Healey and her team expanded to 4.2 by 5.4 metres), the architectural feature dipped down below the ceiling line, creating a visual and physical impediment. To fix this, Healey first inserted an open steel frame to support the elevated structures and allow the back facade to be removed and replaced by walls of full-height, pine-framed windows. A sinuous cove-like ceiling installation (made from moulded foam covered in plaster) elegantly conceals the irregular transition; a different plaster on the walls extends to envelop the separate fridge and freezer and brightly contrasts the pine-plank ceiling.

Complementing that warm pinewood and textural plaster is a material palette informed by the owners' favourite bar in Japan, one that mixes rustic wood tones with light and warmth. Walnut lower cabinets from Boffi wrap the kitchen's work zone and are clad in a natural quartzite with dramatic veining, while a counter-to-ceiling wall of handmade Moroccan zellige tiles in shimmering blue-green tones with putty-brown grout adds character and depth. Open walnut shelves stand in for upper cabinets, a choice whose rationale was twofold: "The lack of upper cabinets enables their three kids to reach everything and allows for the counter-to-ceiling windows," says Healey, who also installed two skylights to introduce even more natural light.

Managing to be both sophisticated and hardworking, the new kitchen is the perfect backdrop for the family's life — one that nods to their time in Japan while providing a space for them to comfortably grow into the future.

LEFT: A mix of materials — warm pine ceiling planks, dramatic quartzite counters, rich walnut cabinets and hand-made tiles — creates a layered and inviting backdrop for busy family life.

BELOW: Just steps from the kitchen and accessed by a full wall of sliders in the dining room is a "meadow" garden where the homeowners grow a lot of their own herbs and vegetables.

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Hot Spots

The latest cooking appliances deliver both advanced performance and professional style

by KENDRA JACKSON

100 SERIES RANGE

An all-in-one oven with nine cooking modes — including rapid preheat, air fry, convection bake and roast, and more — the 100 Series of slide-in electric ranges from **Bosch** covers all the culinary bases with precision. The ceramic glass top's five elements in three sizes (15, 22 and 30 centimetres) provide flexibility. And its sleek design blends seamlessly with both contemporary and traditional kitchen styles; it can sit flush with the wall for an uninterrupted look.

KM7000 SERIES INDUCTION COOKTOPS

Designed by **Miele** to be unobtrusive and seamlessly installed, the frameless KM7000 induction cooktops (shown is KM7735) are equipped with four cooking zones plus a PowerFlex area that can be programmed to serve as individual cooking surfaces or combined into one large one. The energy-efficient appliances offer multiple modes, including Auto Heat-Up, Stop & Go (which reduces all active cooking surfaces to the lowest level simultaneously to prevent burning) and a "keep warm" function that maintains a consistent temperature until the rest of the meal is ready.

EXPRESSIVE SERIES

Inspired by Bauhaus principles and minimalist architecture, the Expressive series from **Gaggenau** is more than the sum of its parts — chamfered stainless-steel frames and a floating metal operational ring lend the wall ovens (which can be arranged horizontally or vertically) visual interest and controlled performance. With coordinating combi-steam, combi-microwave, oven, coffee maker, and warming and vacuum drawers, the series allows for personally tailored kitchen set-ups.

30-INCH INDUCTION RANGE

A new statement-maker from **Dacor**, this 30-inch induction cooktop features an intuitive full-touch command centre that controls the nine flexible cooking modules from one place. To accommodate pots and pans in a variety of sizes, up to four of the modules can be synced together into one large FlexZone. Each "element" features an LED "virtual flame" to signify when it's in use, while a built-in seven-inch screen offers an expert Chef Mode guide with advice and step-by-step recipe instructions.

Making It Real

The National Hardwood Lumber Association champions the sustainability — and beauty — of natural wood in an elegant new publication

ABOVE: Industrial design studio Diez Office teamed up with the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) and urban greening specialists OMC°C to create the pioneering Vert pavilion at the 2024 London Design Festival.

Photo by Ed Reeve

The aphorism that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" dates to at least the early 19th century. And while the well-worn phrase has been applied to everything from fashion and diction to social etiquette, it takes on a particularly acute depth in design, where natural materials are replicated with ever-growing frequency and sophistication. Take hardwood: In recent years, engineered surfaces, vinyl and laminate — and even ceramics — have all sought to simulate the depth, texture and beauty of nature. The results? It should all be taken as a compliment.

While imitations abound, the authentic beauty of real hardwood remains unmatched. Under the stewardship of the National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA), the North American hardwood industry is also evolving to meet increasingly rigorous sustainability standards. Today, a growing emphasis on carefully managed forests, responsible harvesting and local sourcing practices is bringing a renewed spirit of innovation to an industry rich in heritage. What's more, the NHLA's new biannual publication, *Hardwood & Design*, shines a spotlight on the unparalleled aesthetic versatility of hardwood surfaces.

Led by Hardwood Industry Liaison Brennah Hutchison, *Hardwood & Design* offers architects, designers, builders, developers and contractors a unique window into a historic yet fast-evolving industry. Reporting on everything from flooring and wallcoverings to furniture, cabinetry, doors, millwork and mouldings, the publication pairs design ingenuity with education on a wide range of topics, including the provenance of North American hardwoods and emerging technologies like thermally modified wood. Inspiration is at the core: Whether in the rich dark tones of walnut, red alder, elm, cherry and red oak or the bright, energetic hues of white oak, maple and ash, *Hardwood & Design* showcases a wealth of possibilities.

In 2025, the integrity of North American hardwood is more appealing than ever. In a global landscape increasingly defined by material waste and an expanding carbon footprint, the fundamental qualities of hardwood — whose surface can be sanded down and refinished, requiring less frequent replacement compared to synthetic alternatives — continue to stand out. And in high-traffic areas, whether residential kitchens and living rooms or commercial spaces like offices, hotels and restaurants, the durability of hardwood makes it an exceptional choice. It's a surface for the 21st century. And as *Hardwood & Design* elegantly demonstrates, there's nothing like the real thing. ***nhla.com***

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Striving for Clarity

While paying homage to the best moves in the German auto company's glorious past, Audi Concept C ushers in a bold future for EV excellence

Audi CEO Gernot Döllner presented the Audi Concept C to an enthralled audience in Milan this past September.

“We have cut through the noise of distraction to once again create cars that bring us joy as engineers and as designers, as drivers and as passengers — cars that are the culmination of everything we know and of everything we are today,” announced Audi CEO Gernot Döllner. “This is the start of something new: our striving for clarity.” Standing on a stage surrounded by a rapt audience in a beautiful Milan courtyard, Döllner was priming everyone for the reveal of a brilliant new all-electric sports car: Audi Concept C. Elegant and sculpted, bold yet minimal, the EV rolled onto the stage to raucous applause. Clamouring to get a closer look, audience members flocked to the titanium-finished marvel.

For the world-renowned German auto manufacturer, Audi Concept C is a return to form: Its inspiration was found in the Auto Union Type C (1936) and the third-generation Audi A6 (2004). “Courageous yet understated — that is everything that Audi is about,” explained Massimo Frascella, Chief Creative Officer. “So we took this quality from our past to create a design philosophy that will set a very clear path for our future. Because Audi was not born an icon — Audi became an icon through a consistent willingness to dare, and now it’s time to dare again.”

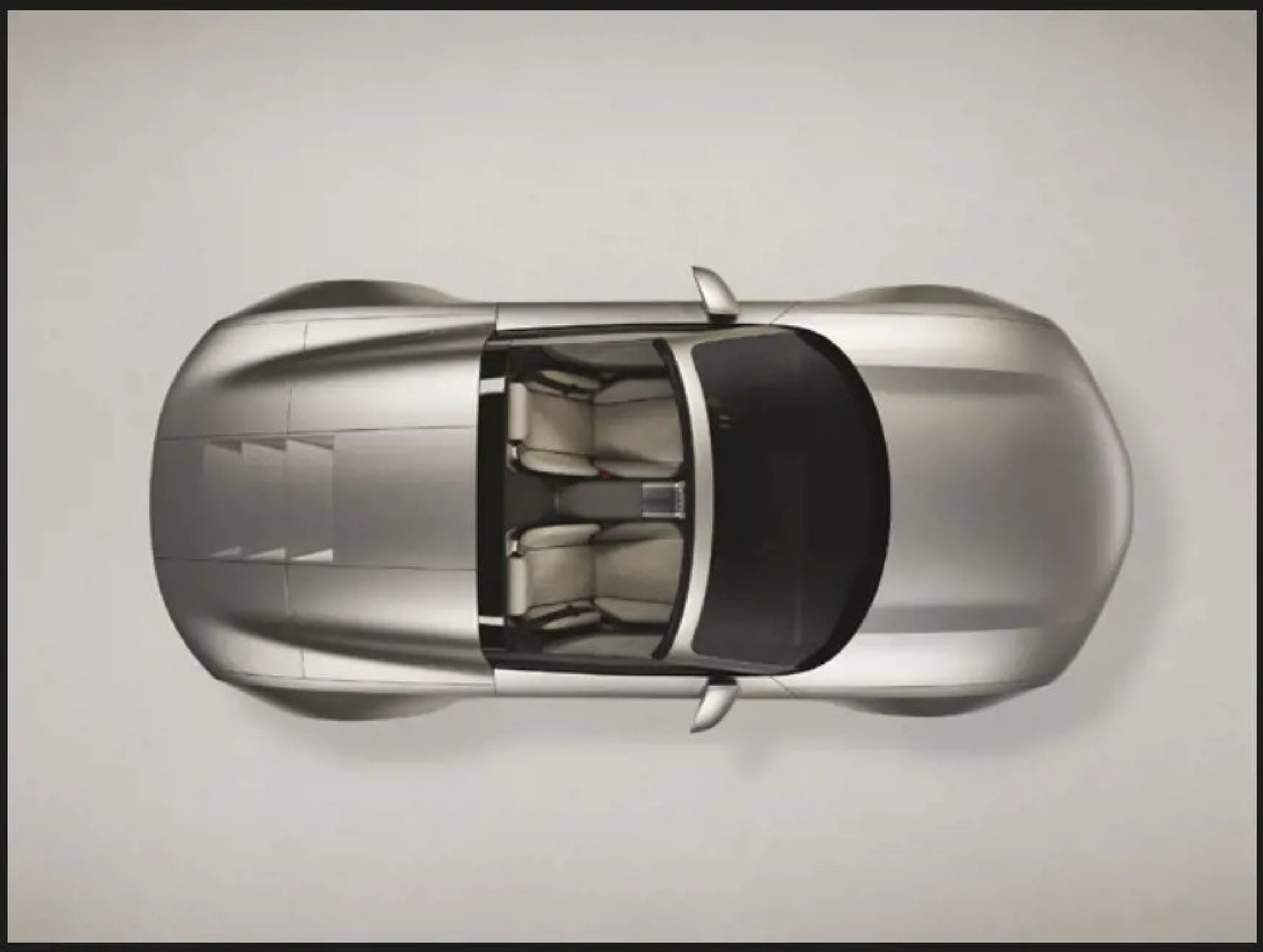
Concept C boldly confronts the future with a new Audi brand face featuring a vertical frame and a distinctive light signature: four horizontally arranged elements in each headlight and rear light that will signal Audi’s unique presence on the road day and night. A strong shoulder line defines the volume of the car, whose proportions — including a cabin that extends far back and sits firmly on the body — are driven by a central-battery layout.

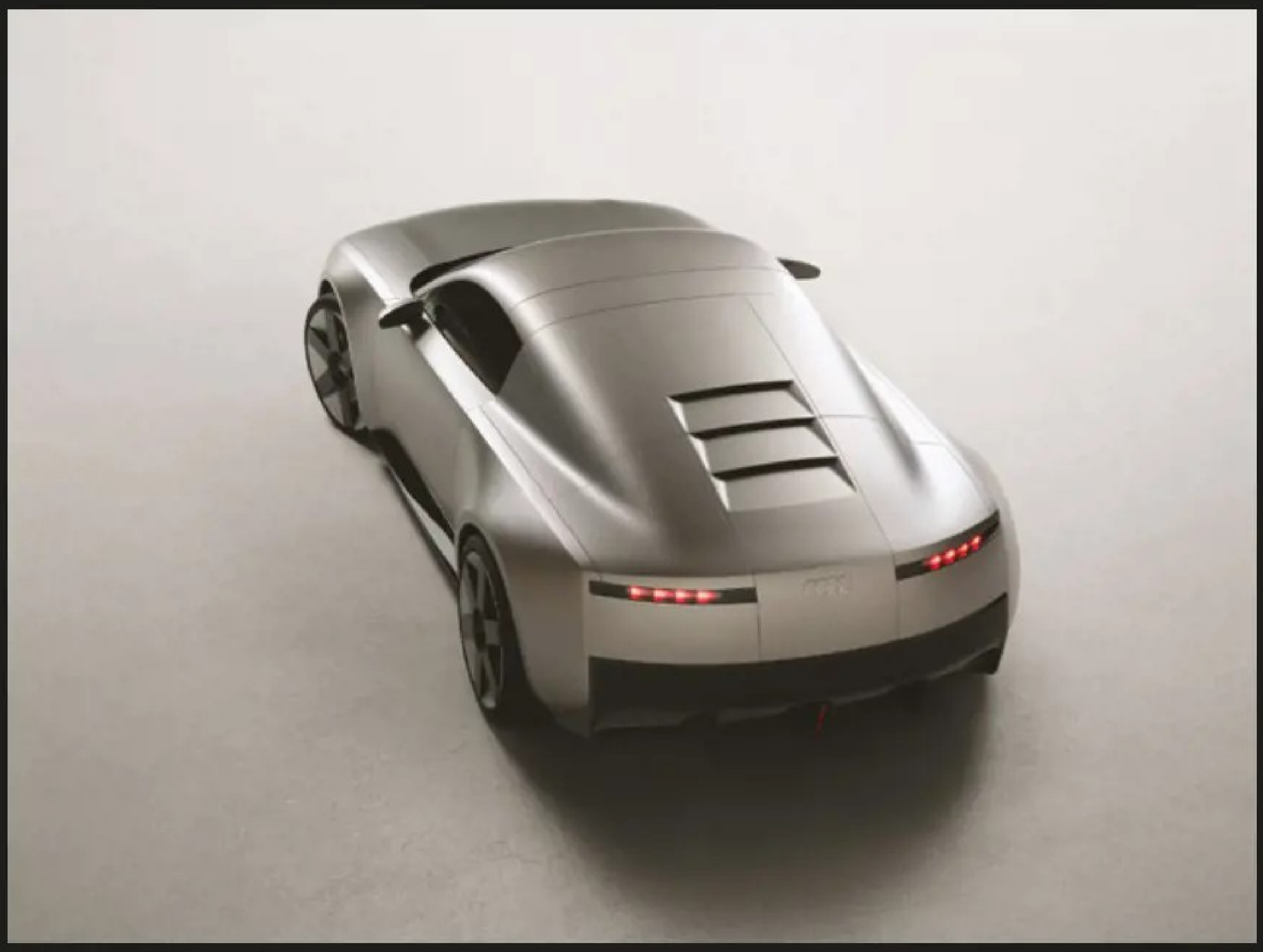
And, in a first for an Audi roadster, the hardtop roof is retractable. In a moment that elicited many oohs and aahs during its debut, a driver demonstrated how the roof elegantly folds back, offering the benefits of a convertible while retaining the unified essence of a monolithic body style. At the rear of the Audi Concept C, clean surfaces and horizontal slats underscore the car’s sporty character.

Free from distractions, the minimalist interior features strong architectural surfaces and clear geometric forms. The physical controls, in anodized aluminum, provide a tactile experience that reflects mechanical prowess — augmented by the unmistakable “Audi click” — while the round steering wheel, with its metal Audi rings front and centre, is crafted with precision.

Complementing the car’s titanium finish, the interior palette is balanced by warm natural materials and soft, indirect ambient lighting. The 10.4-inch foldable display, also inspired by previous generations of Audi vehicles, provides users with information tailored to every situation in an intuitive way.

“When we are aligned with a software- and design-driven strategy, the journey of cultural growth never ends,” Döllner says. “And isn’t that beautiful?” Audi Concept C embodies the brand’s new design philosophy, striking a radically simple pose from every angle. “Clarity was the starting point here too; emotion and character are the results.” ***audi.ca***





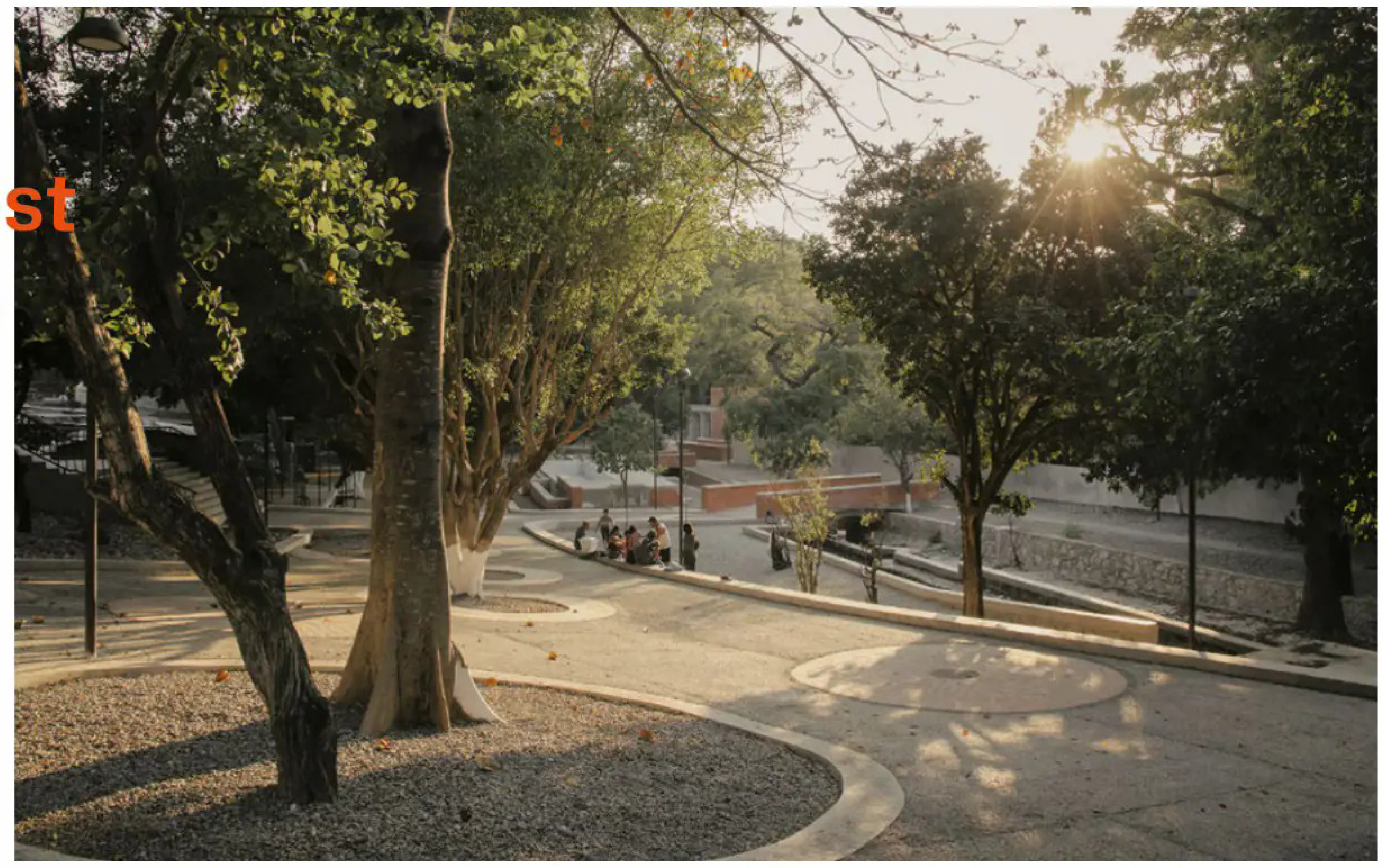
The EV’s sculpted contours were highlighted in a striking finish of titanium. In a first for the German auto company, the sports car features a retractable hardtop roof.

The Urban Edges

Fernanda Canales designed the Border Library and Public Park in the town of Agua Prieta, Sonora, with a shaded underside where folks can gather in a variety of ways.

What can we learn from Mexico's investment in neglected urban spaces? **ANA KARINA ZATARAIN** speaks with architect and urban planner Román Meyer Falcón about the *Programa de Mejoramiento Urbano*, a once-in-a-lifetime government program that has returned 1,300 public spaces to the people

In Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the capital of the southernmost Mexican state of Chiapas, a subtle but powerful shift is occurring.



TOP AND ABOVE: Architecture firm RZERO created the 10,410-square-metre Aguaje Park and Community Center in a formerly unsafe area of Tuxtla Gutiérrez. The accessible and inclusive public promenade includes pools, kiosks, and soccer and basketball courts.

PHOTOS BY ZAICKZ MOZ (TOP); SEDATU

Last year, a park in the peripheral district of Las Granjas was renovated by Mexico City–based firm RZERO. The renewed space, known as El Aguaje, now features a central kiosk for neighbourhood assemblies, shaded walkways lined with trees, multi-purpose sports courts, and a communal laundry and play area near a seasonal stream. During rainy months, children splash in the recycled-water pool while their mothers chat nearby. Year-round, the park is teeming with life: Teenagers play ball at dusk, elders rest on benches beneath the trees, and families stroll along the walkways.

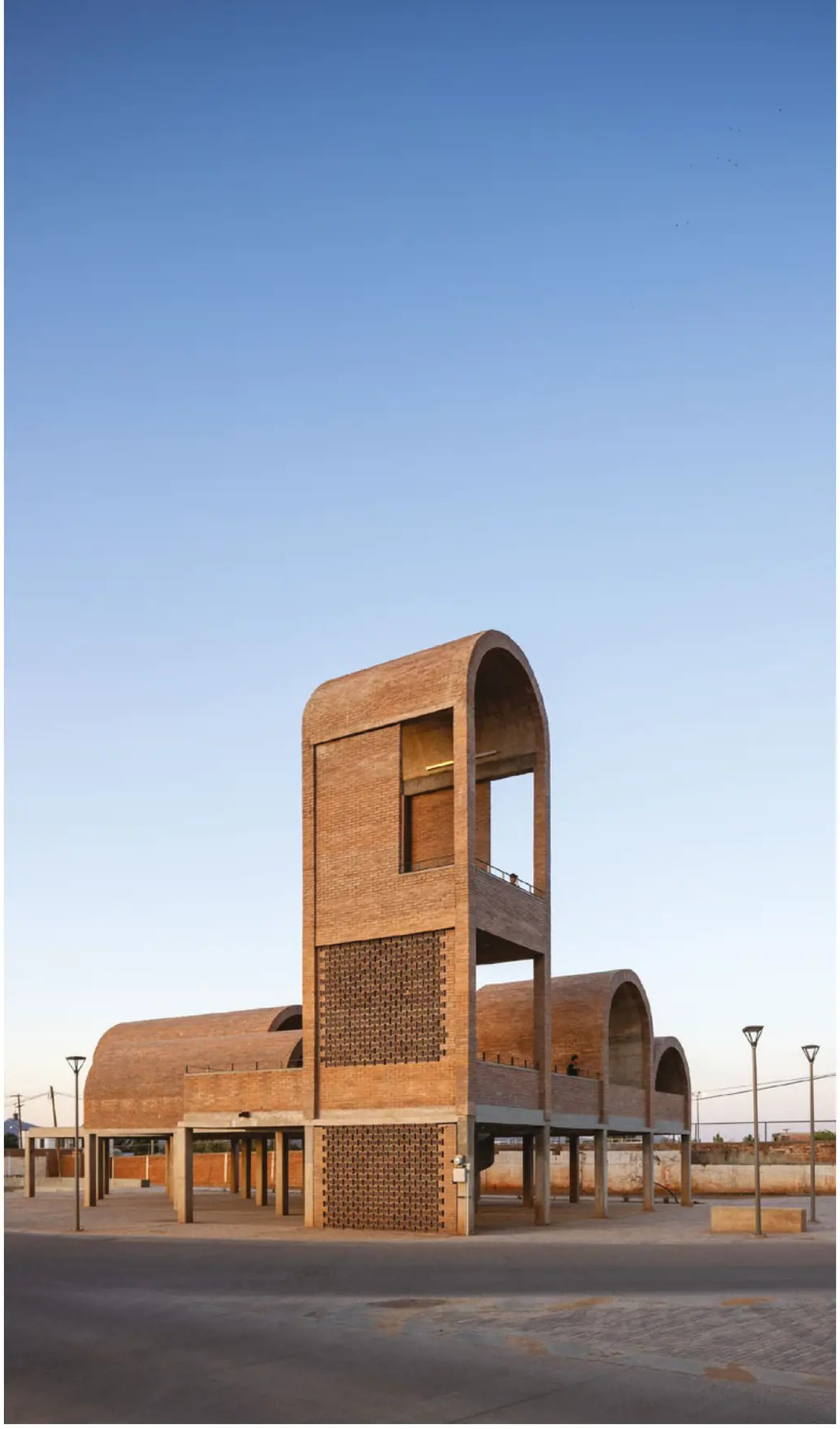
It's an elegant and understated intervention — one of five that RZERO completed in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, including a market, a sports centre, a plaza, and a second park. Between 2020 and 2024, projects such as these started cropping up by the hundreds across Mexico, all located within historically underserved and marginalized communities, remaking formerly unsafe and neglected areas into vibrant public spaces and community hubs.

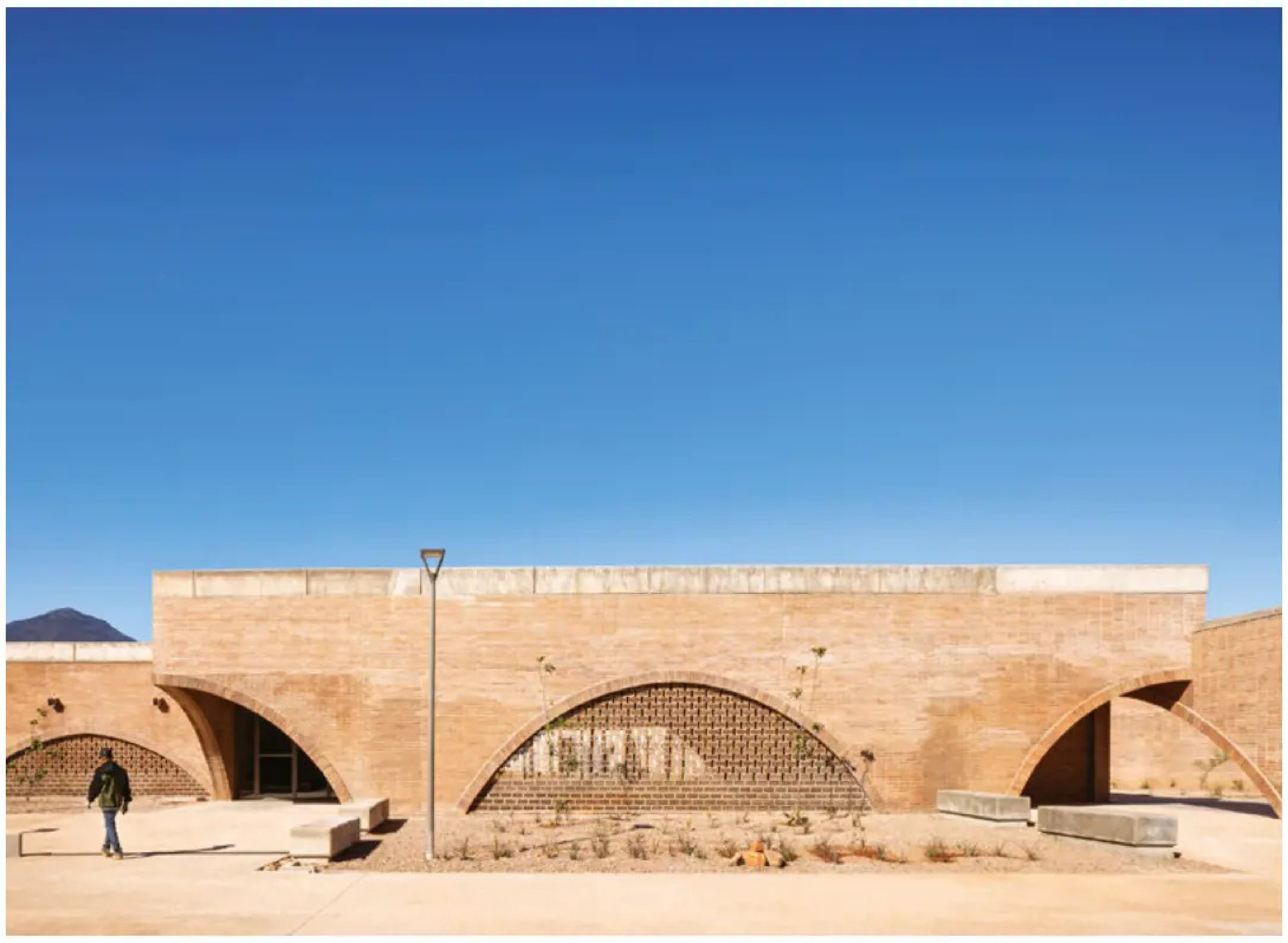
The transformation began during former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador's six-year term, which was launched by an inauguration speech in 2018 that introduced his celebrated phrase "For the good of all, first the poor." It's arguable whether López Obrador fully delivered on that promise. (In 2024, he was succeeded by his protégé, Claudia Sheinbaum, Mexico's first female president in its 200 years of independence.) Certain programs, however, made a compelling case for what it could look like in practice. Among them was the Urban Improvement Program (*Programa de Mejoramiento Urbano*, or PMU), led by architect and urban planner Román Meyer Falcón through the Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU). Over just a few years, it delivered more than 1,300 public works in nearly 200 municipalities — most of them places where government investment had historically been absent.

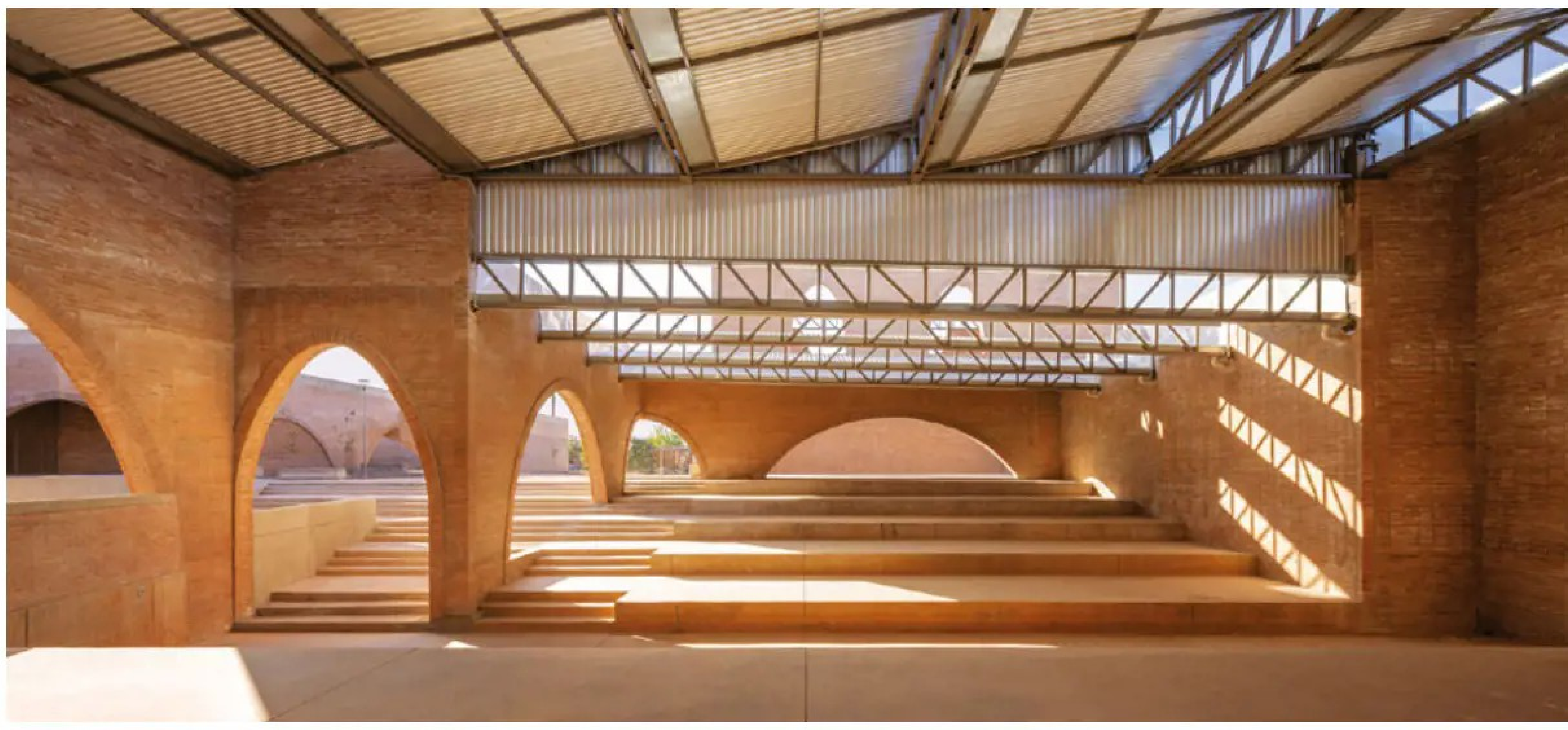
"How can we address the major socio-economic inequalities in the country's most marginalized neighbourhoods?" Meyer Falcón asks, recalling the gist of the program in early conversations with the president. The federal initiative aimed not only at filling gaps in infrastructure but at rethinking what the government owes its citizens. "Beyond basic services like power and sewage, we considered the broader civic infrastructure that makes a city whole: schools, universities, cultural centres, hospitals, sports facilities, main roads...all the things a city should have to support a good quality of life." And while it is fairly obvious to point out that these essential elements are consistently missing from urban peripheries — and that this fact both contributes to social inequality and stifles upward mobility — addressing the matter is quite complex, especially in Mexico, where bureaucratic processes and rampant corruption often complicate efforts to deliver meaningful change.

Long before any architecture firms were tapped to design these projects, the team at SEDATU focused on analyzing and updating the land-use, ecological and urban planning programs of each municipality so that they could be reviewed by local councils and recorded into the public property registries. Then came the fieldwork — interviews, surveys, and workshops — within the selected communities and their local governments to determine what form the intervention would take. "Though it wasn't always possible due to various constraints, we tried to create critical physical connections between new infrastructure and how people would access it," Meyer Falcón says. "If we built a school, we also aimed to improve the avenue leading to it, upgrade the lighting and sidewalks, ensure it connected to public transport, and maybe link it to a nearby park or sports centre."

When it came time to bring in the designers, SEDATU invited more than 50 Mexican architecture studios to collaborate with the PMU. Some were later asked to take on more projects; others were quietly let go after they delivered the plans for their







first. "Our relationships to architects were largely defined by the quality of their work on the field," Meyer Falcón tells me. "We collaborated repeatedly with those who, though we were not paying them for supervision, would visit the sites, sit with the construction companies, answer any questions, and show a true commitment to the follow-up work that was not included in their contracts." Without providing names, he offers the counter-example of certain architects that simply consulted Google Earth, never stepping foot on site. "It was a good way of determining who was actually interested in designing public architecture," he concludes.

Mexico City–based architect Fernanda Canales was among those who adopted a hands-on approach. In addition to leading her eponymous firm, Canales is a prolific theorist who has written several books about the interdependence of the private and public spheres. When SEDATU approached her to design a series of buildings in two towns along Mexico's border with the United States, the commission came with a predetermined brief: Build an auditorium and a market. But to Canales, the real work began with questioning the brief itself.

"The most important part of the projects we developed in [the towns of] Agua Prieta and Naco was reprogramming the government's initial request to suit the local conditions and daily needs of the community," she says. In these small towns, where public infrastructure was scarce or nonexistent, and long-term building maintenance was unlikely, Canales saw little point in following a conventional approach. "We had to rethink what an 'auditorium' or a 'market' actually meant in a place with no safe public spaces, no one to run the facilities, and no budget for upkeep."

In Agua Prieta, Canales designed a linear park and a library, the latter a structure raised over a sunken ground floor where stairs become seating for an open-air amphitheatre. There, even those who might never use the library (accessible by a concrete ramp that snakes around the elongated building) can enjoy the shade, public restrooms and open forum. "These are buildings that work for the community regardless of their specific program," she says. "Adaptability and openness were the main design strategies." Particularly in border towns, where transience is part of daily life and public space is often shaped by surveillance or control, spaces that invite users to make them their own can trigger subtle but meaningful changes in perspective. In that sense, "architecture is a powerful antidote to vulnerability and social injustice," says Canales.

ABOVE LEFT: Fernanda Canales's Border Overlook and Market Plaza in Naco, Sonora, serves as a gateway to the border city. Its open spaces are used for a covered market, a small outdoor forum and a lookout point.

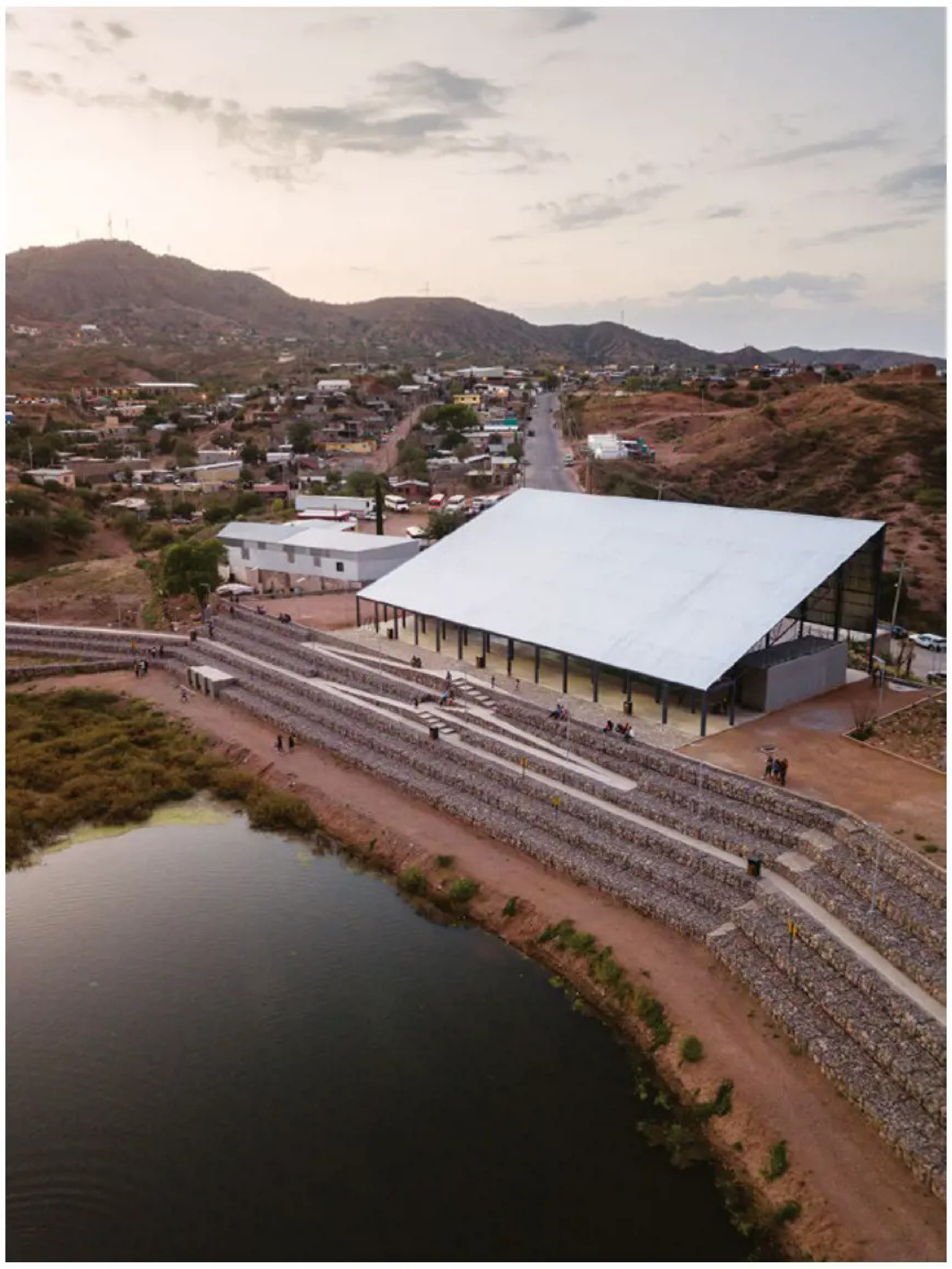
ABOVE RIGHT: Also in Naco, Canales's Community Development Center provides safe areas for public recreation and cultural activities. Both projects feature a perforated brick with a tapestry-like pattern that enlivens their humble facades.

PHOTOS BY RAFAEL GAMO

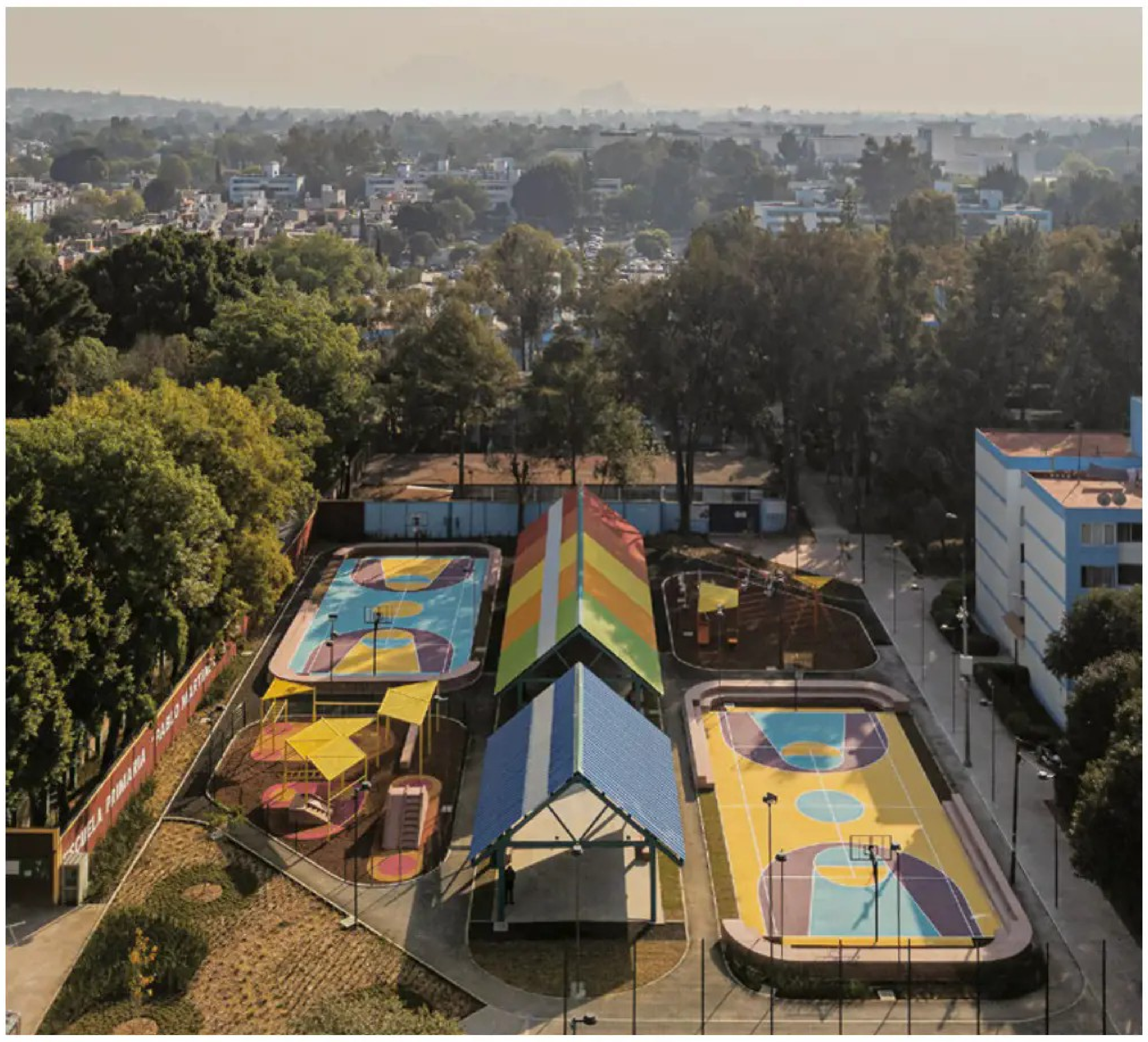
For Naco, Canales reconceived the market as the entrance to the city: a plaza designed to slow down traffic and create safe pedestrian crossings, with several large shaded structures. The building is almost sculptural in its simplicity, consisting of a series of concrete columns and red brick barrel vaults that host a variety of informal uses and provide citizens with a unique perch from which to take in their surroundings. “It became a kind of lookout point where, for the first time, people could see their city from above, as well as the neighbouring city on the other side of the border,” says Canales. The auditorium, meanwhile, was imagined not as a sealed space used a few times a year but as a community centre made up of seven blocks that host a cafeteria, a daycare, a workshop area, classrooms, multipurpose spaces, restrooms, and an open-air auditorium that functions as an extension of the sidewalk. Echoing the nearby market plaza’s formal qualities, the complex employs the same materials: concrete stairs that double as seating and brick walls with wide, arched openings that, in lieu of glass, feature lattices of perforated bricks.

When asked to reflect on the most successful projects, Meyer Falcón doesn’t hesitate to offer a candid assessment. “I’ve always been honest: About 33 per cent of the projects were excellent, 33 per cent were average, and 33 per cent weren’t the best,” he says. But among the high points, certain lessons stand out, particularly around how architecture can double as local economic stimulus.

BELOW: Taller Capital’s eight-hectare Colosio Embankment Dam in Nogales, Sonora (another SEDATU-commissioned project) won a 2022 Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize for demonstrating how a “vulnerable neighbourhood can be socially and physically transformed by offer[ing] the habitants public space to use,” in the words of the jury.



Another government-run program takes up the torch



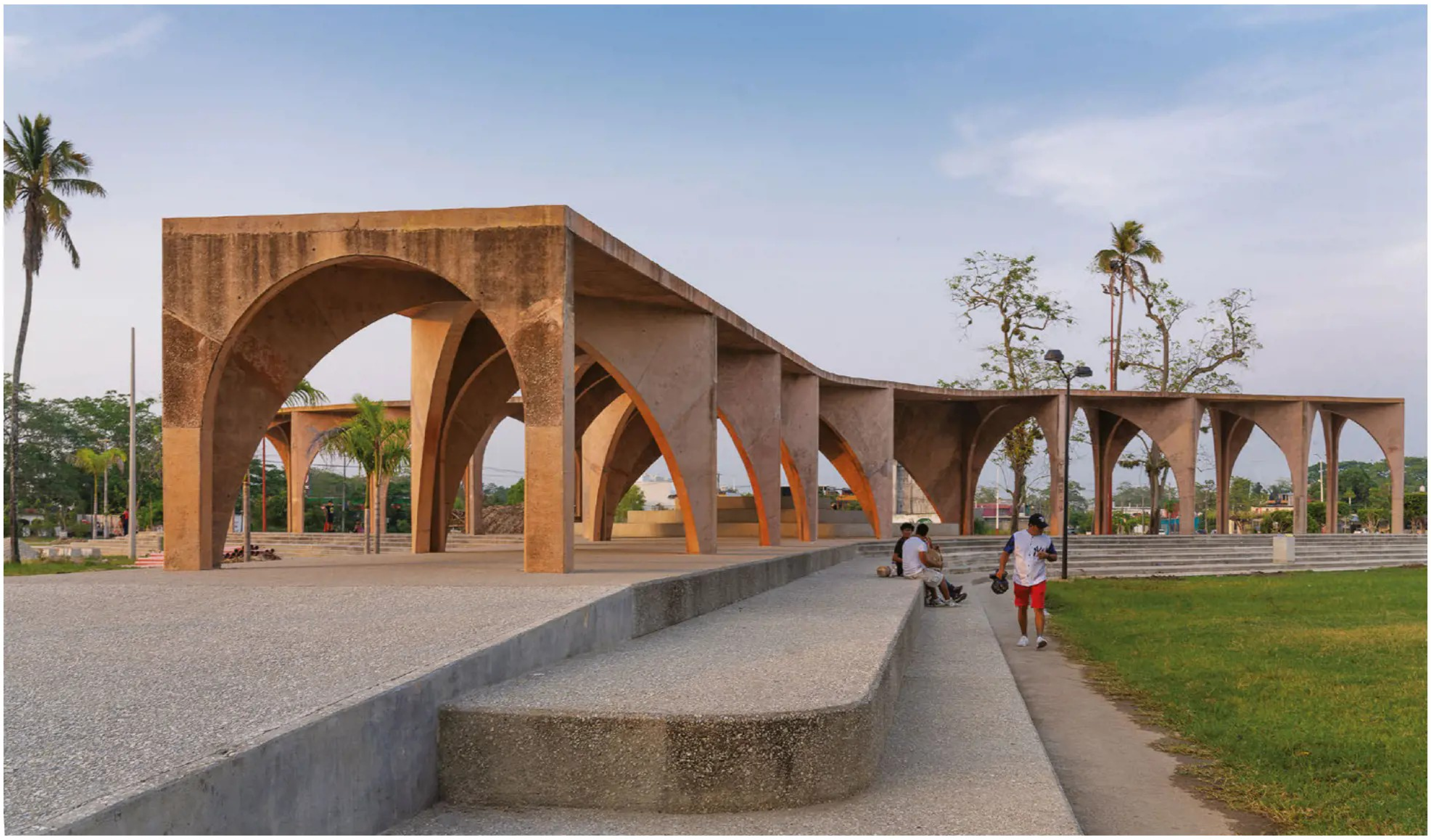
SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1972, Infonavit (the Institute of the National Housing Fund for Workers) has connected Mexico’s formal workforce to credit for housing — becoming, at one point, the largest mortgage lender in Latin America. But quantity often came at the expense of quality. For years, the homes it financed were built on the urban periphery, with minimal access to jobs, transit or public space. Some were so remote or poorly constructed that entire developments were later abandoned.

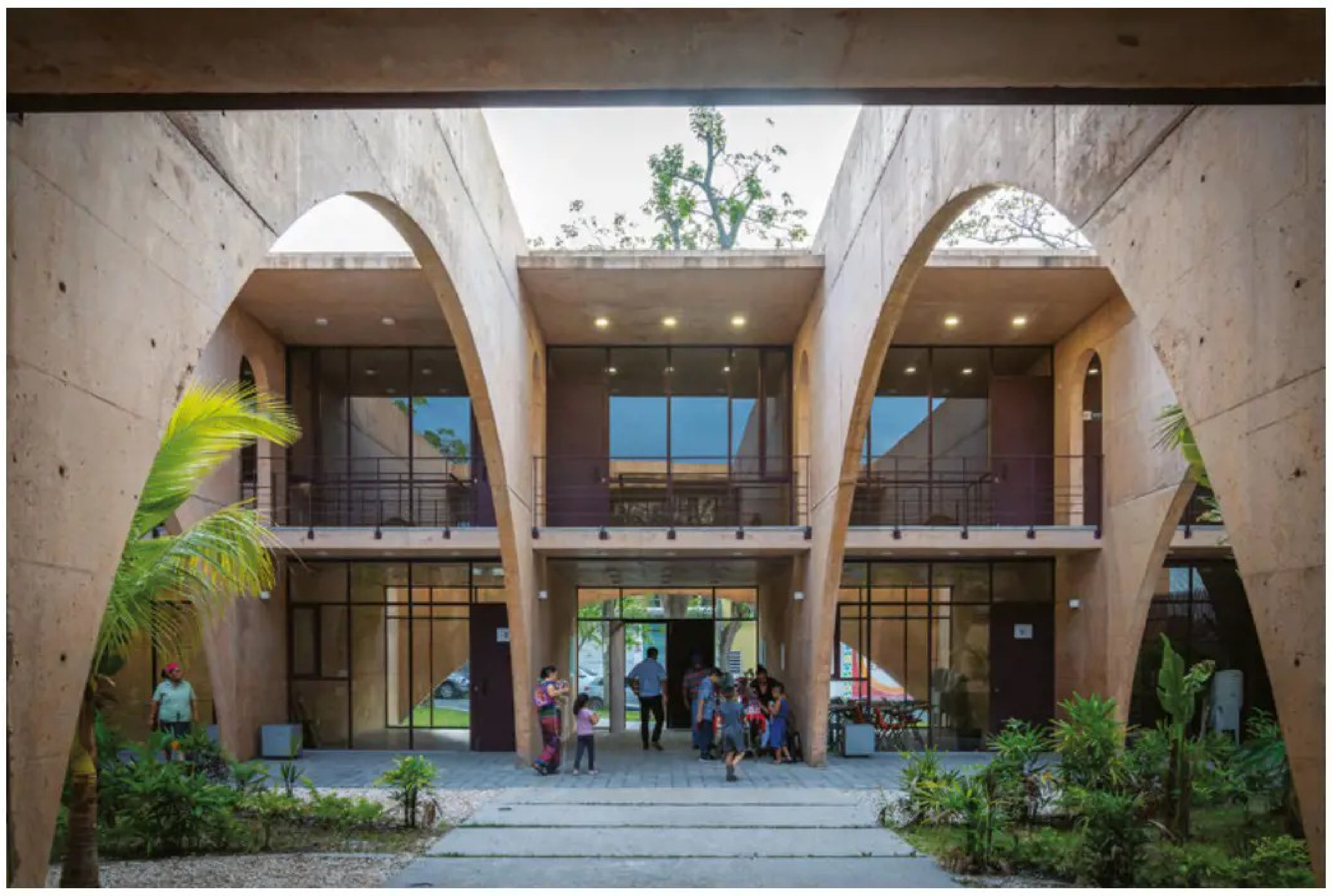
In the past decade, various initiatives have brought Mexican architects to collaborate with Infonavit, signalling an intention toward a more thoughtful approach. Del Territorio al Habitante (2017), for example, invited 84 firms to design housing projects across the country in response to the specific contexts of rural areas, rather than the cookie-cutter models of the past. (The plans were handed to future homeowners along with a credit to cover the costs of self-construction.) Last year, AMASA Estudio was commissioned to lead a series of transformative interventions within Infonavit’s large urban housing complexes in Mexico City.

The projects — including UH Infonavit Santa Fe, Iztacalco and CTM Culhuacán — focus on revitalizing neglected communal spaces through sensitive design strategies that respond to the specific challenges of each site. At Santa Fe, a once-forgotten ravine was transformed into an accessible, multi-level park with a multi-purpose hall and a rooftop basketball court, carefully preserving existing vegetation. In Iztacalco, AMASA enclosed a deteriorated hemispherical structure, creating a vibrant covered forum that invites social interaction and exercise. Meanwhile, their work at CTM Culhuacán (above) turned a dilapidated plaza into a lively community hub with playgrounds, sports courts, and gathering spaces designed with input from residents.

Current Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum, who took office in September of 2024, has yet to articulate a clear architectural vision for Infonavit, leaving it to be seen how her administration will shape the future of Mexico’s social housing landscape.

PHOTOS BY RAFAEL GAMO (COLOSIO DAM); ANDRES CEDILLO, COURTESY OF AMASA ESTUDIO (CTM CULHUACÁN)





One of the program's early directives was to avoid prefab or industrialized construction methods. "We told architects we needed labour-intensive methods: masonry, rebar, poured concrete," Meyer Falcón explains. That attention to process, not just final product, meant that design decisions had to consider local trades, materials and capacities. The approach reduced costs and, more importantly, strengthened the link between public space and the people using it. "This allowed us — contractually — to ensure that 38 per cent of project budgets went to wages," he says, "which creates an economic boom in these small towns. And it fosters a sense of ownership, because local people were hired to build the spaces."

Another architect who engaged deeply with the PMU was Bernardo Quinzaños, whose firm, Centro de Colaboración Arquitectónica (CCA), designed a series of interventions in the states of Nayarit, Southern Baja California and, most notably, Tabasco. There, in the small town of Jalpa de Méndez, CCA created a group of civic spaces in one of the most underserved regions in the country. "Jalpa de Méndez is a municipality where virtually the entire territory is impoverished," Quinzaños said. He described the town, with the exception of a small historic centre, as "the sort of place where the hand of an architect had never been seen." CCA's award-winning Community Development Center — which includes a library, auditorium, workshops, and flexible areas that can host various cultural events — invited the citizens of Jalpa de Méndez to gather in ways that were previously impossible.

It was also a tangible expression of a deeper conviction about the role of architecture in society. Though president López Obrador faced intense scrutiny and criticism from political opponents for the entirety of his term, the PMU stood out as a rare example of public policy that transcended partisan lines. "At the firm, we feel strongly that it is our responsibility to create public works while remaining agnostic toward political parties," Quinzaños reflected. "We have to work for the people, not for whoever is currently in office."

Meyer Falcón stresses that the PMU was simply building on a national legacy of high-quality public projects. In the 20th century, renowned architects like Mario Pani, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Teodoro González de León designed housing complexes, university campuses, museums, auditoriums, libraries and government buildings that still stand today as symbols of progress and pride. The large majority of those, however, were in metropolitan areas. "The past administration gave us a chance to build public works in places that had never seen them before," he says, "and that, I think, is one of the most important changes we achieved."

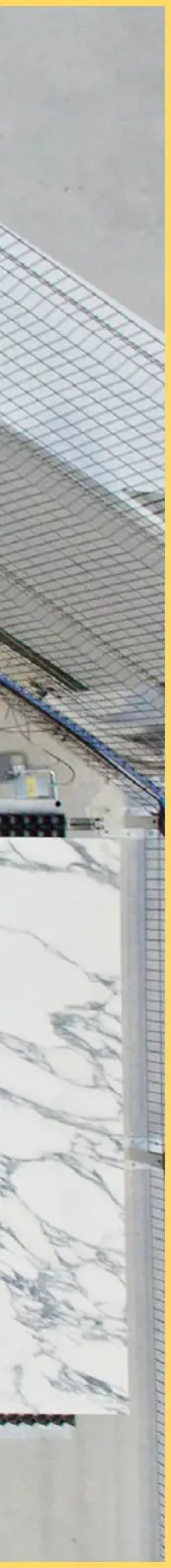
ABOVE: El Campestre Recreational Park & Community Development Center, by Bernardo Quinzaños and his firm, CCA, "rescues and transforms" one of the most iconic public spaces in Jalpa de Méndez, Tabasco. At the park's centre is a pavilion with a crossed-arch structure (top); the Community Development Center (above right) is a cultural and educational hub that promotes inclusive development opportunities for the local community.

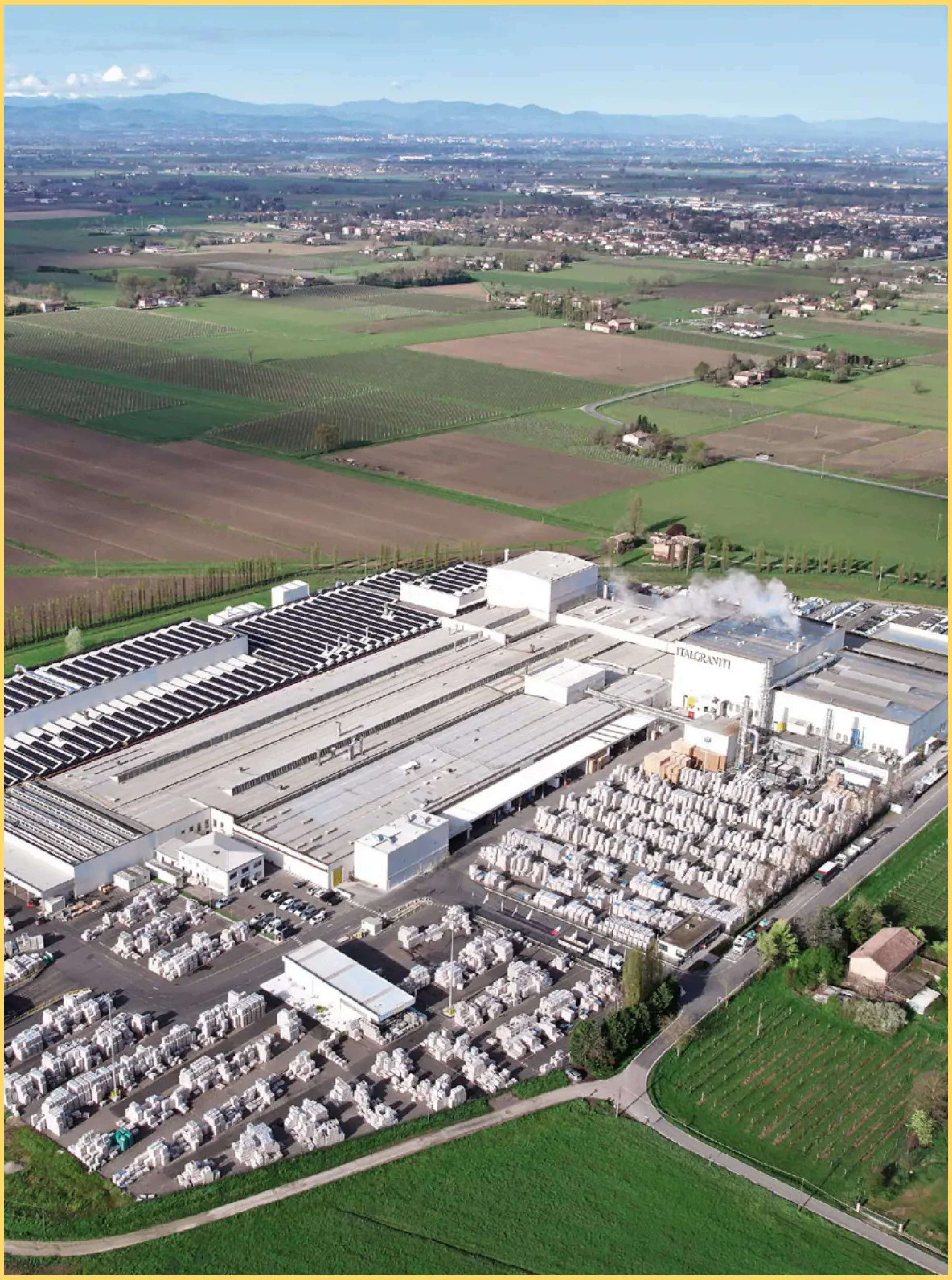
PHOTOS BY JAIME NAVARRO

Sustainable Heritage

Italgraniti is leading the global ceramics industry with a holistic emphasis on sustainability, aesthetics and workplace well-being

In 1950, the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy stood on the precipice of a bold, transformational shift. That year, the husband-and-wife team of Romeo Giacobazzi and Afra Fontana opened one of the region's first modern factories, setting the stage for rapid economic development. A decade later, the operation employed some 2,000 people producing over 20 million square metres of floor and wall tiles per year. By the time Romeo and Afra's son Dante Giacobazzi co-founded Italgraniti in 1994, the company was becoming a global innovator. In 2025, it stands at the industry's innovative edge — and at the brink of another existential shift.





ITALGRANITI

Italgraniti's Italian production site outside Reggio Emilia recently underwent a major expansion, adding a new plant specifically dedicated to the production of large slabs while staying true to the company's ethos of sustainability.

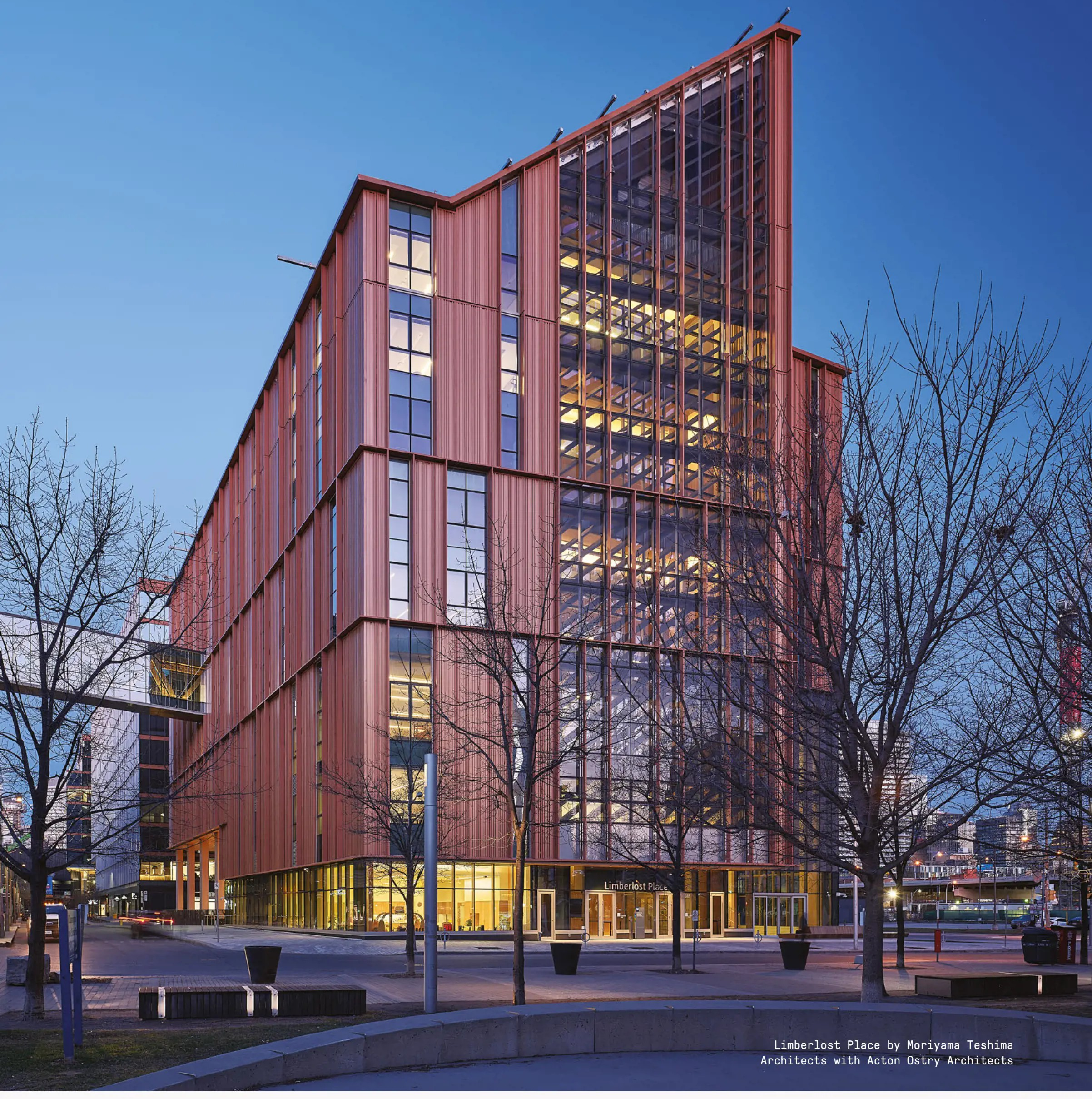
Today, Italgraniti is at the forefront of a sector reinventing itself for a sustainable future. Now an unparalleled global hub of ceramic design innovation, the Emilia-Romagna region is also home to the world's most advanced — and environmentally sensitive — manufacturing. Case in point? Opened this year, Italgraniti's new factory in San Martino in Rio sets a new benchmark for responsible production. Devoted to manufacturing large porcelain stoneware slabs, the facility pairs exceptional technical precision with an advanced photovoltaic system that supplies all on-site energy, as well as a range of sustainable features resulting in 100 per cent rates of water recovery and raw/cooked waste recycling; 99 per cent of all waste is also recycled. Moreover, the facility boasts a 55 per cent reduction in particulate emissions compared to industry benchmarks, and 90 per cent energy self-sufficiency.

And it remains a family company at heart. Now employing some 300 people, Italgraniti is rooted in the Emilia-Romagna region. Representing the third generation of leadership, Elisa Giacobazzi and Francesco Maturo continue to be guided by the values of innovation and entrepreneurial culture as the company evolves. "Incorporating a high level of technological innovation, the new factory operates with greater energy efficiency, more sustainable use of resources and significantly lower emissions and waste," says Elisa Giacobazzi, the company's CEO. Just as importantly, it is a locus of industry and culture. "It is also a major driver of local development, with a forecast increase in employment of 25 per cent," she says.

Sustainability is about more than numbers. While an emphasis on reducing carbon costs shapes every aspect of the company's operations, a holistic approach to corporate responsibility also prioritizes workplace well-being. A certified B Corp since 2022, Italgraniti is steadfast in its commitment to a 100 per cent "Made in Italy" ethos while leading the sector in workplace gender equity and pay standards.

Not least of all, it leads the way with beauty. Under the creative direction of architects Andrea Parisio and Giuseppe Pezzano, Italgraniti's award-winning ceramic portfolio pairs heritage with a forward-looking aesthetic and an embrace of emerging technology — leveraging the best-in-class production of exceptionally large, thin slabs and three-dimensional surfaces, as well as outdoor tiles that combine the tactility of indoor flooring with anti-slip surfaces. It bodes well for the next 75 years — and then some. ***italgranitigroup.com***

TIMBER

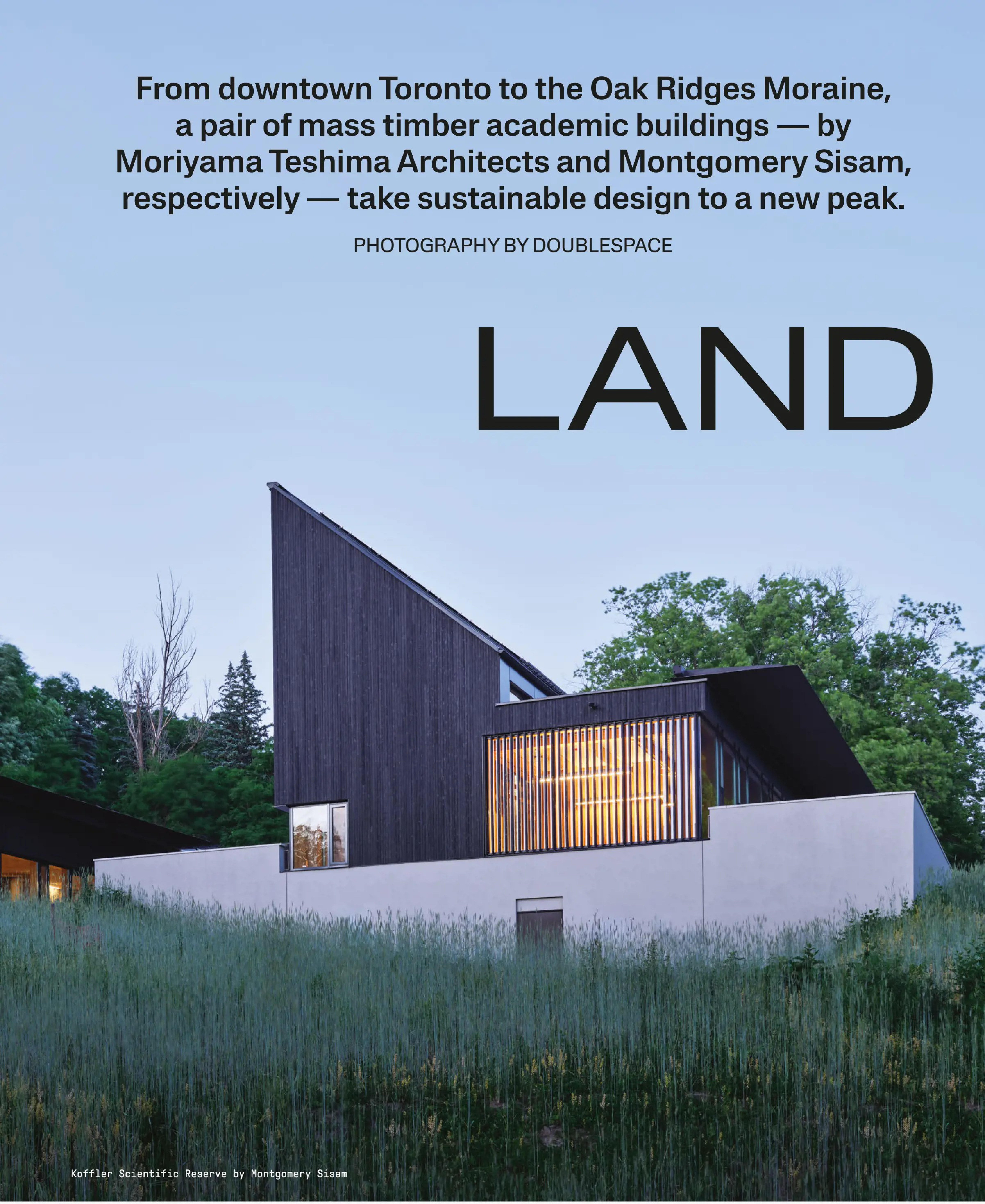

Limberlost Place

Limberlost Place by Moriyama Teshima Architects with Acton Ostry Architects

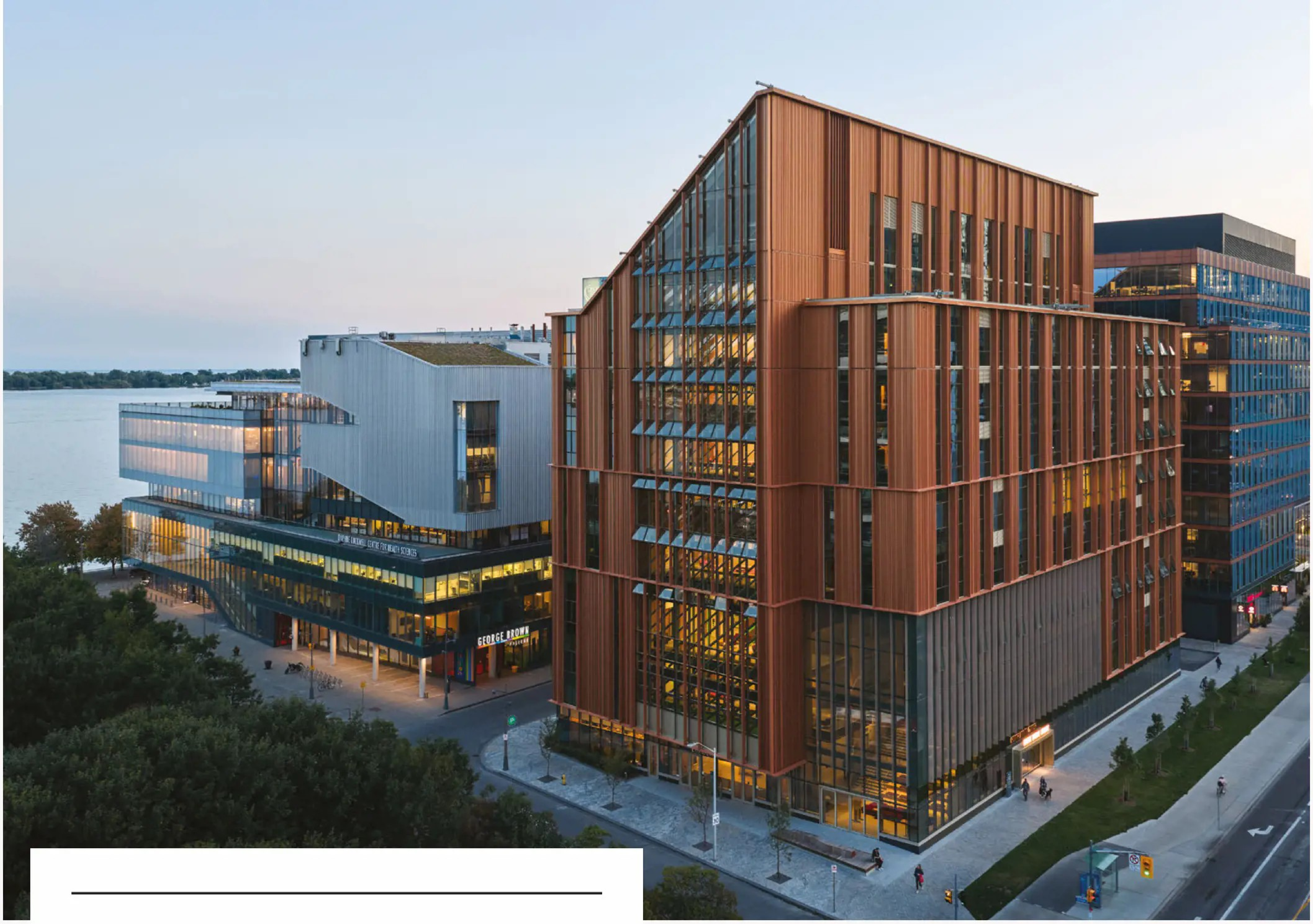
From downtown Toronto to the Oak Ridges Moraine, a pair of mass timber academic buildings — by Moriyama Teshima Architects and Montgomery Sisam, respectively — take sustainable design to a new peak.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUBLESPACE

LAND



Koffler Scientific Reserve by Montgomery Sisam



Living Lab

Long before its completion, Limberlost Place was already a code-shifting precedent for mass timber construction in Canada. Now, architecture students at George Brown College can finally experience — and learn from — its innovative design first-hand

BY
SYDNEY SHILLING

ABOVE: With its penny-coloured prefabricated aluminum cladding, Limberlost Place asserts a strong material identity on the Toronto waterfront.

There are few projects in Toronto that have been more highly anticipated than Limberlost Place. Nearly a decade in the making, the academic building — which opened this fall on the waterfront campus of Toronto's George Brown College to house the school's architectural studies program — marked a major milestone as the city's first mass timber institution. Its design, by Moriyama Teshima Architects (MTA) in partnership with Vancouver studio Acton Ostry Architects, had been lauded with accolades well before the project even broke ground.

When I first visited the building on a hard-hat tour in September 2024, the buzz was palpable as contractors put the finishing touches on the interior. As I stepped off the street and into the soaring, 16-metre-tall Learning Landscape, it was easy to imagine hordes of students gathered on the bleacher steps (a now-quintessential component of many educational facilities) that lead up to the second floor, even amidst the scaffolding. Conceived to emulate a clearing in the forest, the massive glulam columns are on full display, emphasizing the verticality of the space and adding to the sense of wonder. The smell of wood was immediately grounding: The structure, made of black spruce sourced from Quebec by Nordic Structures, is replete with knots and checks, adding to the interior's uniquely "Canadiana" character. Another stunning celebration of timber comes in the form of a massive three-storey CLT stair that snakes through the building's core (and what better incentive to take the stairs rather than the elevator?).

But the pièce de résistance was stepping inside one of its two solar chimneys — the first and perhaps last time I would have that opportunity — as it was being sealed off. "It feels perfectly comfortable in here, even without the mechanical systems on, because of the natural ventilation," explained Phil Silverstein, the Moriyama Teshima principal leading me through. As I climbed into the shaft, my knees shaking a little as I peered down from the 10th floor, I could feel both that breeze and the project's sky-high ambitions. But more on that later.

For Carol Phillips, the MTA partner who led the project, the process of building Limberlost Place was akin to landing a person on the moon. When the college launched an international design competition for the project back in 2017, their ask was for a mass timber, net-zero carbon, future-proofed and smart building. At the time, there was no precedent for a mass timber institutional project in the city. In other words, the architects would be navigating uncharted regulatory territory.

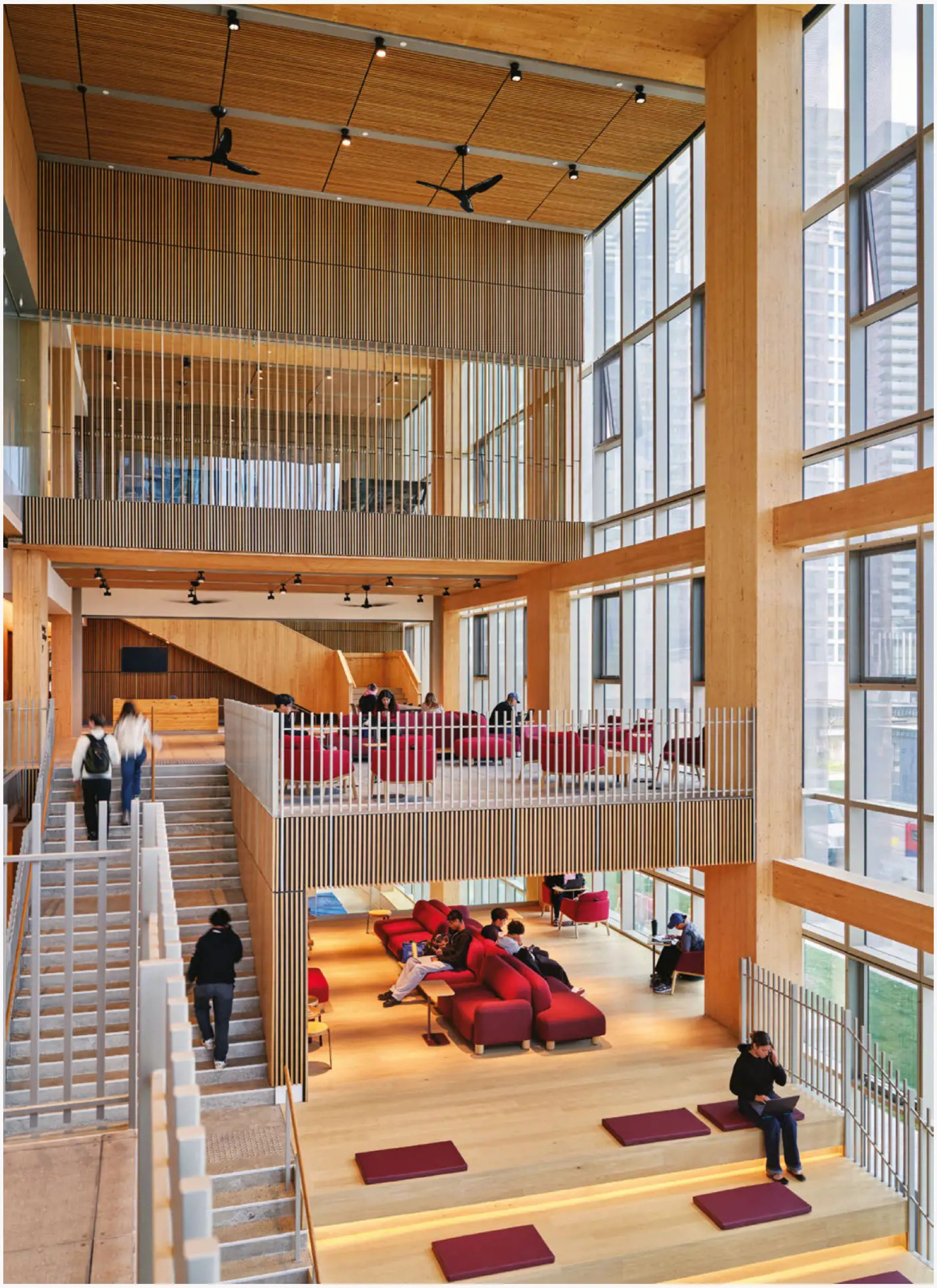
The brief from George Brown, just in terms of the program, was a tall order: It included classrooms to accommodate 3,400 students, a gym, a daycare, offices and communal spaces. And because colleges are training the workforce, they had to be nimble enough to adapt to the needs of their community, meaning the programmatic requirements could change at any time — and they did (the space was originally intended to be used for computer studies, a program that grew exponentially over the course of construction). "This project required us to deeply listen and look at these criteria not as challenges but as real opportunities," Phillips explains. "I think the reason we ended up emerging as the winners is because we did not run away from the constraints; we ran towards them."

One of those constraints was to create between 40 and 60 classrooms with clear sightlines (meaning, no columns within them). The architects devised a nine-metre grid that could accommodate classrooms of that size, but designing a mass timber structure that could span this distance while maintaining all the required programming within the building's 30-metre height restriction was no easy feat: There was limited knowledge available about timber–concrete composite systems at the time. So the team — which included the structural engineers at Fast + Epp — pursued a research grant from Natural Resources Canada to bridge the gap.

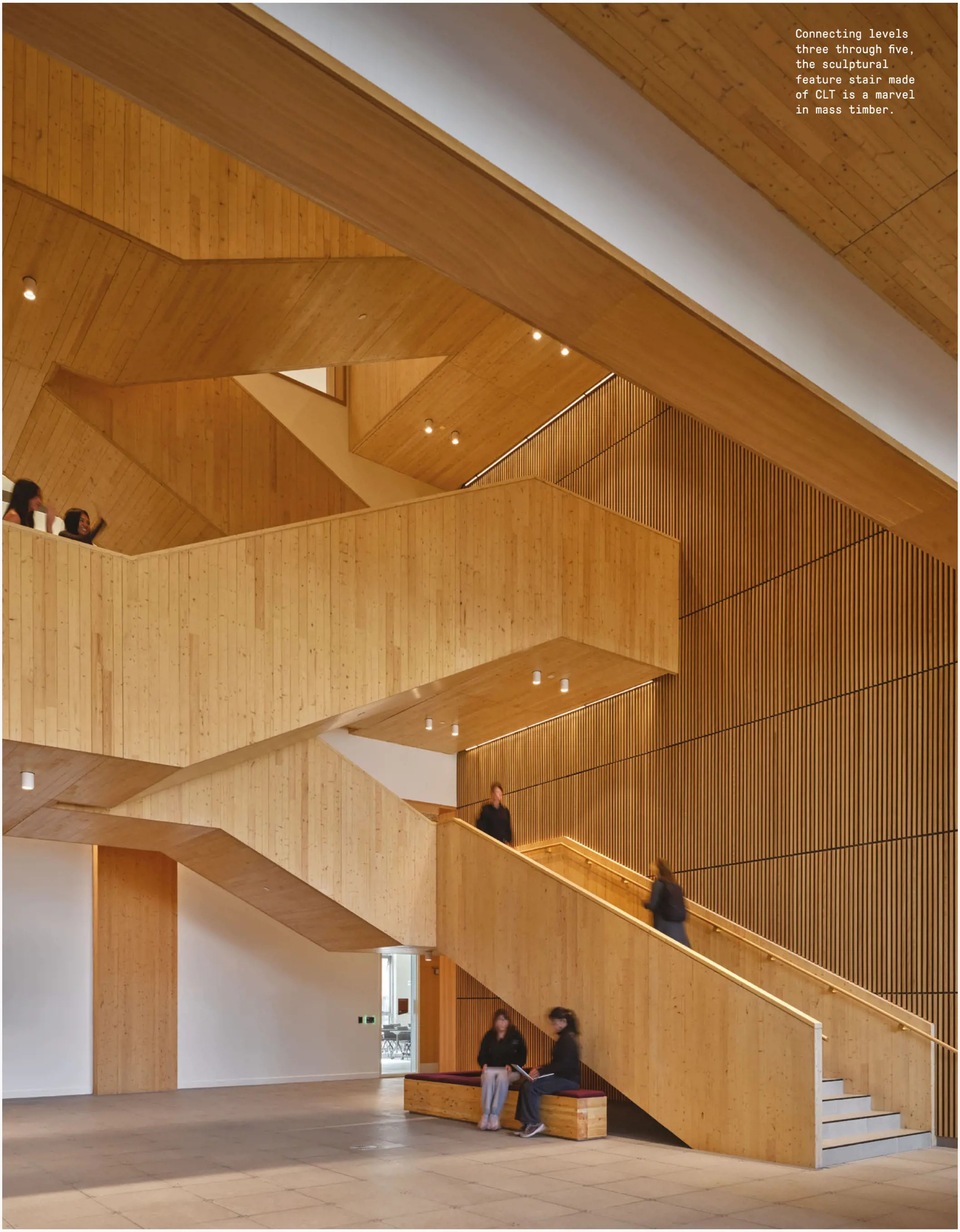
Fast + Epp found inspiration in an unlikely place: parking garages. With similarly restrictive height requirements, these concrete buildings often use a wide and shallow drop panel, which increases the slab's strength around the columns. Knowing that CLT behaves similarly to concrete due to its laminated layers, which run in alternating orientations, Fast + Epp devised an innovative slab band system that could span the full nine metres and measures just 40 centimetres in depth — less than half that of a typical post-and-beam structure. This move gave back an extra floor of programmable space. It was an instant game-changer, enabling the architects to use less material and reduce costs.

The slab band system was initially conceived to be all-wood, but the engineers discovered that, despite being structurally sound, the slab bands were too light and therefore allowed too much vibration. This would impact acoustics and the general comfort of the spaces. To dampen the vibration, they added a thin layer of concrete on top, effectively creating a composite structure.

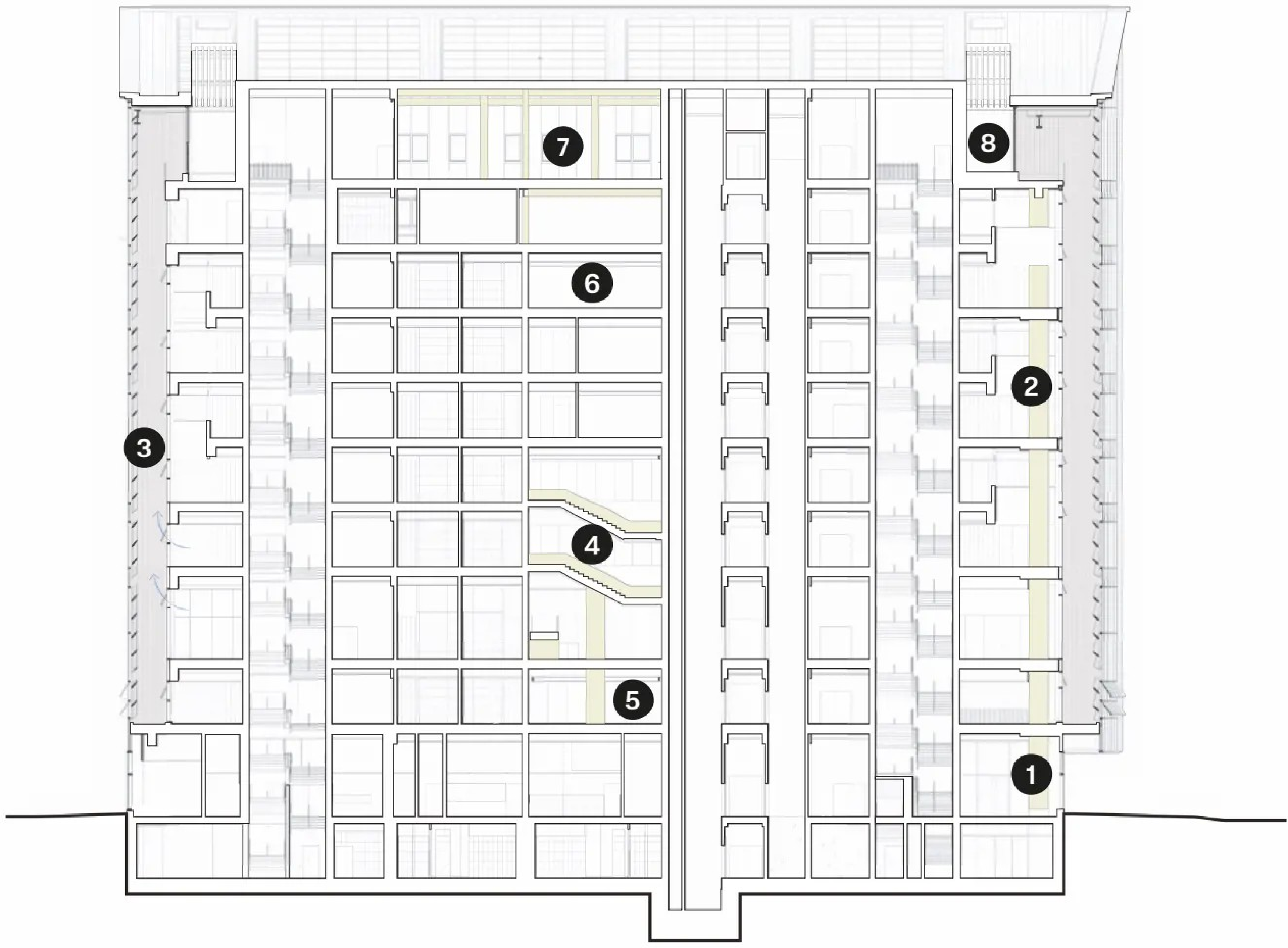
The building's sustainability mandate extends far beyond its timber construction, however. Perhaps its most impressive features are those two solar chimneys, which flank the building to the east and west (and were developed by sustainability consultants Transsolar). They draw air from the open windows up and through, using the stack effect. "In the summertime, when you're cooling the building, you want this area to be cool. So we open the windows at the bottom and the top and



LEFT: The triple-height Learning Landscape serves as both vertical circulation and a vibrant social space for students, and is outfitted with bleacher seating and lounge vignettes.



Connecting levels three through five, the sculptural feature stair made of CLT is a marvel in mass timber.



1. Entry
2. Breathing room
3. Solar chimney
4. Feature stair
5. Lounge
6. Faculty admin/reception
7. Event space
8. Solar chimney outlet

just allow air to circulate through here," Silverstein explains. "In the wintertime, when you're heating the building, you want it to be hot in here. So we button all those windows down, and the heat shelves will warm the space up. It will be like a nice warm blanket on two ends of the building." To perform properly, the chimneys must rise two storeys above the floor they seek to cool, and this was a key driver of the building's pitched-roof form. Its purpose is twofold: The roof also tilts southward at the optimal angle to capture solar energy.

The inclusion of these passive design strategies is just the first step. It was also critical to ensure that the building's occupants would understand how best to use them. To that end, George Brown is developing an app that connects to both the building's automation system and the weather station, indicating to staff if it's a good day to open the windows. Sensors can detect when enough windows are open and, in response, shut off the ERVs on each floor. In this way, architects have given the users almost complete control over their own comfort in the space. Instead of adjusting the thermostat, students can open a window or turn on a fan. If there is plenty of sun, they can turn off the lights.

Giving students a sense of agency was also a guiding principle for the interior design, which places more public programs around the perimeter to animate the street front while also offering quieter moments of reprieve for those who need them. "We've done a lot of vertical campuses, and the life usually dies by level three. Once you go above that, it's a ghost town unless students are in classes. We're hoping that students will gravitate to these spaces, bringing the energy up through the whole height of the building," says Silverstein. Throughout, the building brims with magic moments begging for discovery. In the upper levels, abundant natural light reflects off the structure, evoking the coziness of a wood cabin on a summer morning; a skylight perfectly frames the Toronto Islands hovering on the horizon.

Such an ambitious project could not have been realized without a truly collaborative approach. From the initial kickoff meeting including everyone from the fire engineers to the code consultants and larger overseeing building authorities (and, of course, the client), Limberlost Place exemplified the rare occasion where every stakeholder saw the project's potential to change the industry and was deeply committed to seeing the vision through. Realizing it needed external support to better understand the project, the City of Toronto asked George Brown to hire peer reviewers who could examine the design and approach to the code, checking in at regular intervals and weighing in as decisions were made.

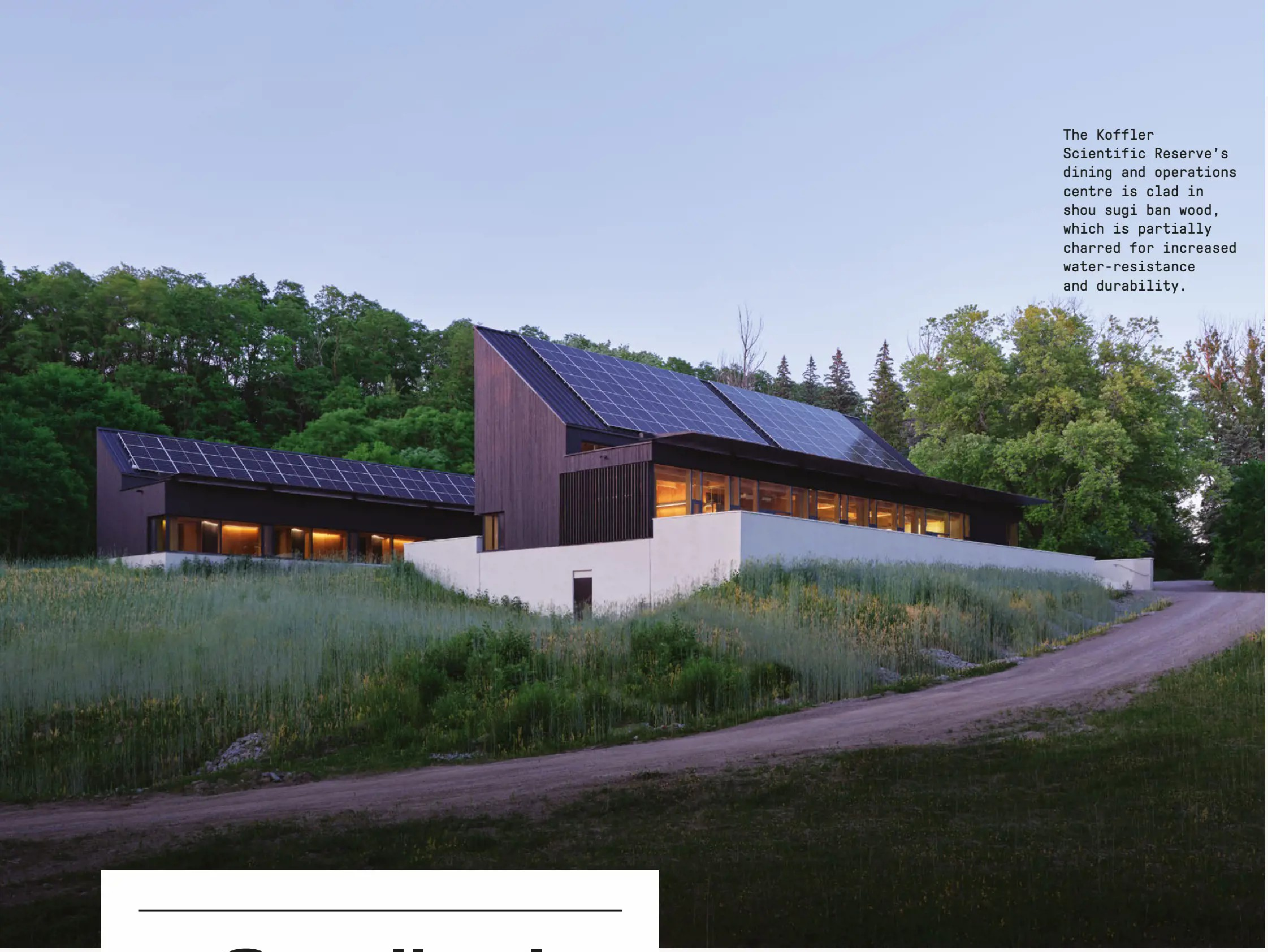
Phillips credits this teamwork for the project's success: "If the mass timber industry is on a larger trajectory, we're at a nascent part of it right now. We need to work collaboratively in order to realize all those possibilities and see where the industry leads us. My hope is that the project will influence how we work together as much as what we build," she tells me.

To mitigate fire risk, the architects were told they would have to encapsulate the entirety of the wood in drywall. For all the effort that went into the structure, it would be a shame to cover it all up. By changing the sprinklers from light to high-hazard, they were able to leave as much of it exposed as possible (50 per cent), an educational tool for the architecture students who would soon walk the halls. "We wanted the building to be didactic," says Phillips. "We wanted it to be a living lab."

Limberlost Place is already an important precedent for practitioners today. Insights from the project have influenced revisions to the National Building Code, all the structural research conducted by Fast+Epp has been made open-source, and the building's life cycle analysis by MTA (currently underway) will also be publicly available. Vibration monitors embedded within the building will allow it to be a resource for continued learning. "We have not held our cards close to the chest," explains Phillips. "We wanted to try and change culture and to create a transferable system that others would be excited by. We don't make a sustainable world by making buildings that are only demonstrative, but by showing what is possible for every building."

Back on the street, Limberlost Place takes on an almost civic character, its single-pitched roof stretching skyward, visible from the nearby Sherbourne Common. Its copper-coloured prefab aluminum facade echoes the nearby Aqualuna residential tower by 3XN — and protects the mass timber structure from moisture that can cause cosmetic stains and, rarely, mould or rot. While there are ample strip windows to allow in natural light, most of the glazing is concentrated on the ground floor, connecting the building to the urban realm. The building's material expression is a refreshing change of pace from the glass towers that have proliferated across Toronto, creating a sea of sameness at the urban scale. Quoting Northrop Frye, Phillips expresses her hope that, as the waterfront continues to evolve, it will in turn develop its own identity and clear sense of place — a *genius loci*.

It is a sentiment that hearkens back to the enduring legacy of Raymond Moriyama, whose architecture has defined public life for so many Torontonians. "When I look back on my own experiences studying in the Toronto Reference Library when I was in Grade 12 or visiting the Ontario Science Centre as a child and with my own kids, Moriyama's buildings were like silent characters that helped to shape my life," reflects Phillips. "I hope Limberlost Place does the same. I feel it shaping our own existence right now."



The Koffler Scientific Reserve's dining and operations centre is clad in shou sugi ban wood, which is partially charred for increased water-resistance and durability.

Cardinal Directions

A sociable dormitory and learning commons, Montgomery Sisam's Koffler Scientific Reserve is a surprisingly intimate marriage of sustainable building science and agrarian vernacular

BY
STEFAN NOVAKOVIC

Toronto's Dufferin Street ranks among the city's most stress-inducing arteries. A messy ballet of honking cars, endless potholes and overstuffed buses meets an eclectic landscape of houses, apartment towers, tightly packed strip malls and sprawling shopping centres. Follow it just 40 kilometres north, however, and the frenetic city dissolves into an entirely different setting. Messy urbanity turns bucolic rolling woodland, and the street itself gently morphs into a rustic gravel road. All the way up at 17000 Dufferin Street, the five-digit address sits among foliage so thick it nearly obscures both the side road and the signage announcing the campus around the corner. Past the leafy branches, you can just about make out the lettering: University of Toronto — The Koffler Scientific Reserve.

Down a smaller gravel path, a hilltop clearing reveals a sharp pair of pitched-roof volumes connected by a single-storey base. The composition is at once boldly novel and quietly contextual. While its blackened wood, sleek glass and crisp angles convey an assertively contemporary aesthetic, the complex does not feel out of place among the region's agricultural vernacular of wooden barns and farmhouses. On a site that's home to an established post-secondary research hub, the new 2,680-square-metre mass timber building combines a student dormitory with a small classroom and a dining hall and common room, setting the stage for the diverse fieldwork taking place in the wetlands, forests and grasslands that make up the university's 348 hectares.

Designed by Toronto's Montgomery Sisam Architects, the dining and operations centre at the Koffler Scientific Reserve replaces a dated cluster of buildings previously used for ad hoc dorms and research facilities. Once a series of agricultural plots, the site was first assembled as an equestrian centre in the 1950s, which was then donated to the university by philanthropists Murray and Marvelle Koffler in 1995. "It was never great agricultural land, but it proved to be a fantastic place for scientific research," says Montgomery Sisam principal Bob Davies, highlighting the wealth of biodiversity on Dufferin's doorstep. While the setting was exceptionally well-suited for learning, the same couldn't be said for the buildings. "There were three old barns there, none of which were intended to serve as student housing or educational spaces," says Davies. "It wasn't working anymore; the buildings started to need increasingly significant repairs, and it was also really difficult for the university to monitor and maintain livable conditions." It translated to a seemingly simple brief for new student housing with an emphasis on shared social spaces, as well as a small on-site classroom.

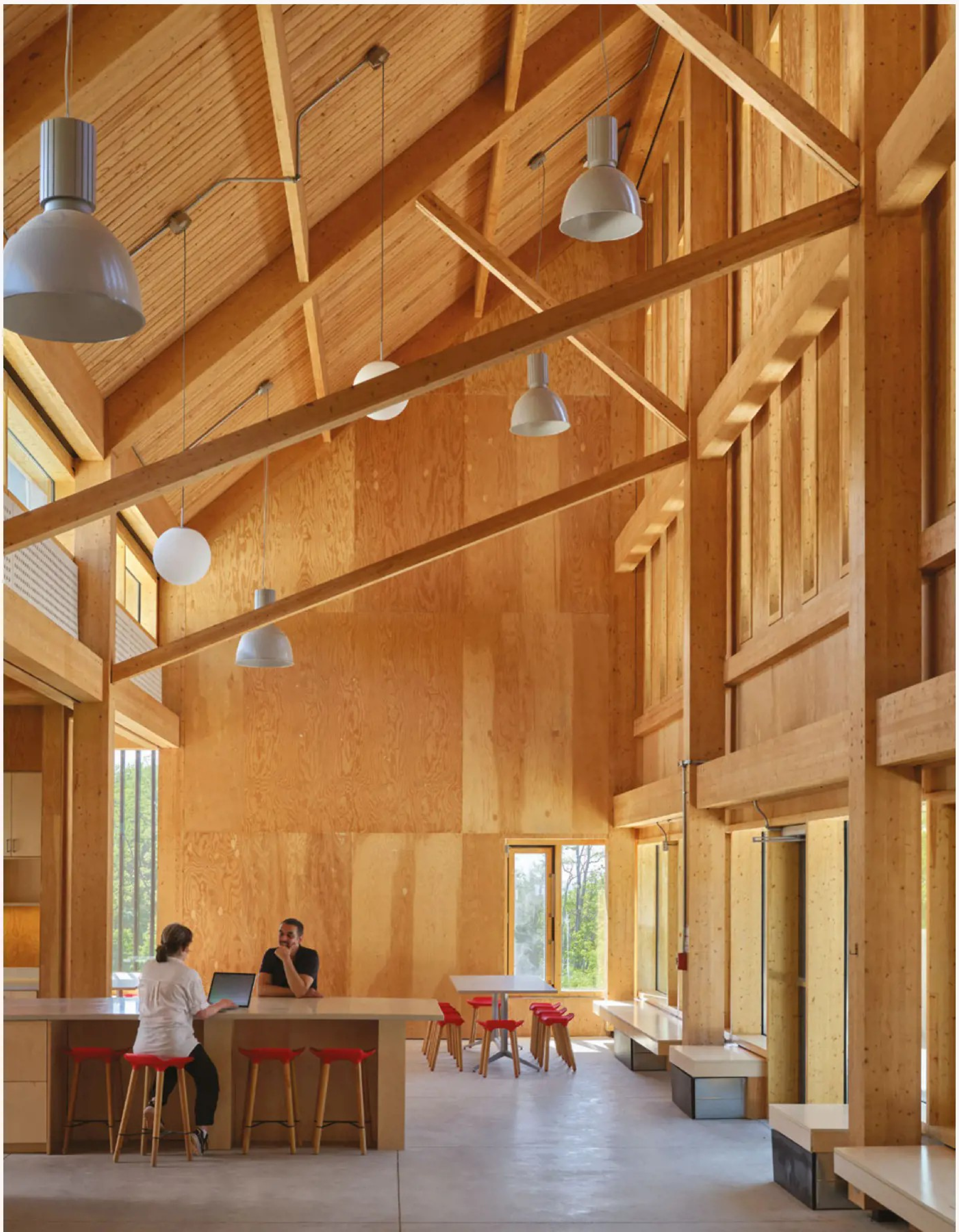
Although removing the existing buildings cleared the way for a reimagined campus, the ecologically sensitive landscape meant that all new construction had to fit within the footprint already disturbed by previous development and demolition. "Our intervention was limited to the site of the three old barns and an adjacent asphalt parking lot, which had been in very rough shape itself, that was also removed," says Davies. Moreover, the highly seasonal nature of the university's research programs — and its variable student population — presented an additional challenge. "Every summer, the numbers swell as undergraduates join the group, which is otherwise mostly graduate and doctoral researchers."

In lieu of a larger (and more carbon-intensive) centralized building that would remain at least partially empty most of the year, the university opted for an unconventional hybrid solution. The main building houses 20 students and the adjacent cluster of 20 bunkies accommodates up to another 40; the shared amenities in the main structure — like the kitchen, bathrooms and living spaces — are generously oversized to support a larger summer population and foster an inviting, convivial dynamic year-round.

"The footprint itself was limited, but the open natural surroundings gave us freedom to orient the footprint. In the absence of existing infrastructure like a road or other buildings to relate to, we decided to align the structure with the cardinal directions," says Davies. The gesture served several goals. For starters, the direct southern exposure allowed the building to maximize on-site photovoltaics. This in turn shaped the two prominent shed roofs that define the formal expression. "We knew we wanted solar panels, which yields a certain angle based on our line of latitude to optimize energy production," Davies explains.

Of course, an efficient and carbon-conscious building takes much more than solar panels. While power generation influenced the angular forms, the project is just as profoundly (albeit slightly less conspicuously) shaped by the movement of light, air and heat. Framing the common room's pitched elevation, a flat roof and sunshade is carefully positioned to welcome the warming winter sun while mitigating uncomfortable summer rays. Inside, the airy common space is contoured to move warmer air out of the building; an automated window system opens to release heat through the tall clerestory windows. Constructed with glulam columns and beams with a tongue-and-groove roof, the building is a hybrid of mass timber and conventional light-frame wood construction. The partially exposed glulam structure is complemented by simple, low-carbon finishes of gypsum board and plywood veneer, which emphasizes a connection to nature; these panels can be easily removed to allow for swift maintenance and repair work.

The passive strategies continue below grade. A ground source heat pump harnesses stable subterranean temperatures to warm and cool the space above, circulating fluid through deep underground pipes to absorb heat from the earth during the winter and return it in the summer months. The



RIGHT: The C-shaped building comprises two angular volumes, the larger of which houses the striking refectory and a social student commons.

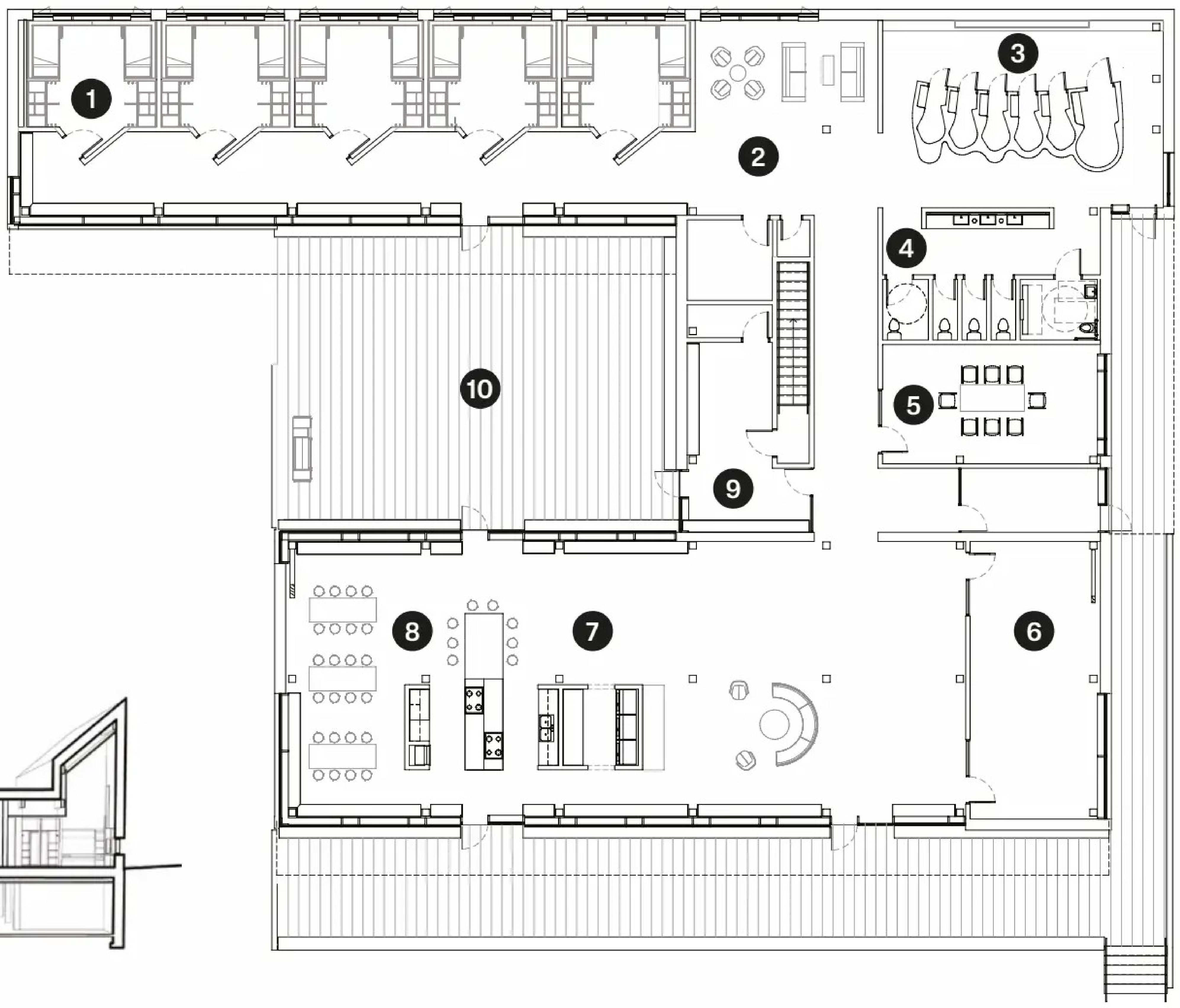
massive earth tube is an even simpler system: Outdoor intake air is cooled or heated underground before being released into the building. According to research by Natural Resources Canada, such systems can warm winter air by about 14.3°C and cool summer air by nearly 6.8°C. "The earth tube is really an ancient technology," says Davies. "Greeks and Romans built these."

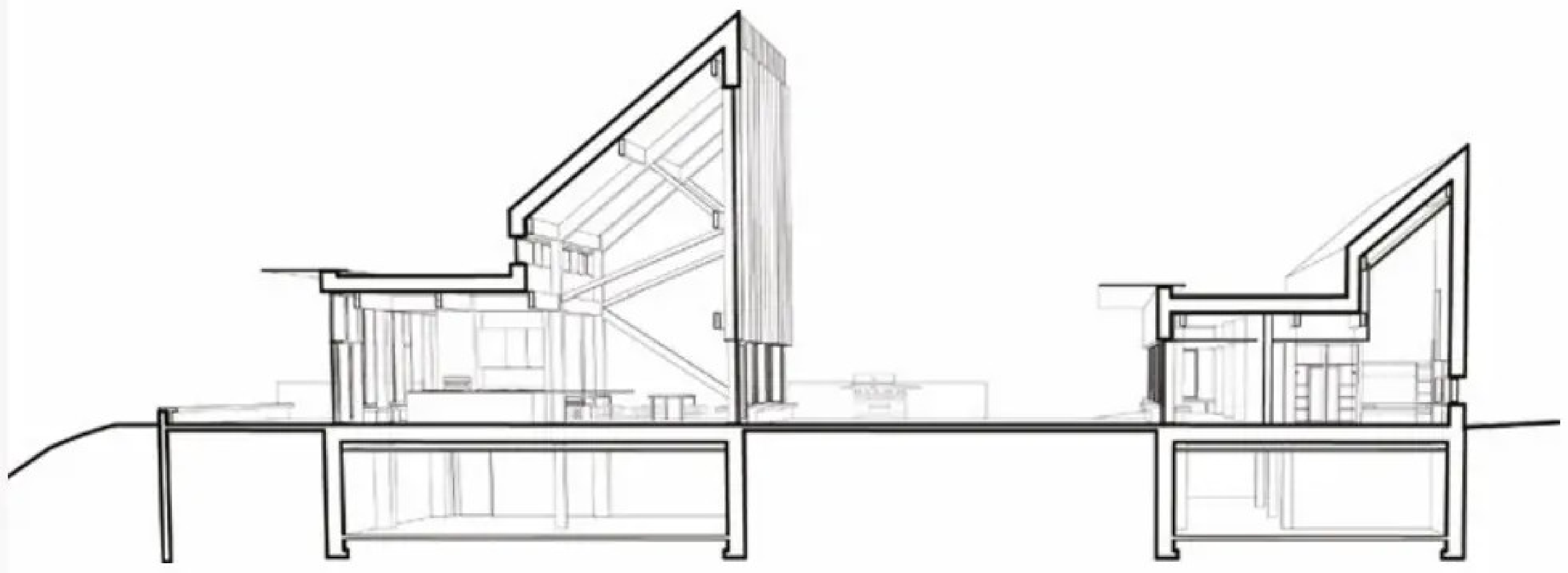
Yet while the earth tube and the careful solar configuration harness technologies that date to antiquity, such strategies are innovative in a 21st-century building culture that remains dominated by carbon-intensive mechanical systems. According to Davies, learning from history shaped the whole of the project. "There's not much in this building that's new," the architect tells me, noting that the individual volumes were similarly inspired by agrarian forms. While the dark wood facade and pitched roofs evoke the barn, the inspiration runs deeper, driving the design's low-carbon principles. "In a barn, you typically have a stone base, where animals are kept in the winter, and then the upper part is where hay is stacked to dry. But what happens is that the heat from cows and pigs and horses rises into the hay, with a risk of spontaneous combustion," Davies explains. "Over time, they learned to build barns with gaps between the upper boards, bringing in natural ventilation and letting the heat escape.

TOP LEFT: The 20 wooden bunkies are arranged around an open courtyard, replicating the logic of the main building in miniature.

LEFT: In the residential wing, each dormitory is fronted by an angled chalkboard wall, carving out a sense of privacy while introducing spaces for visual learning and problem-solving.

1. Four-person bedroom
2. Common room
3. Showers
4. Washrooms
5. Office
6. Classroom
7. Hall
8. Refectory
9. Mud room
10. Quad



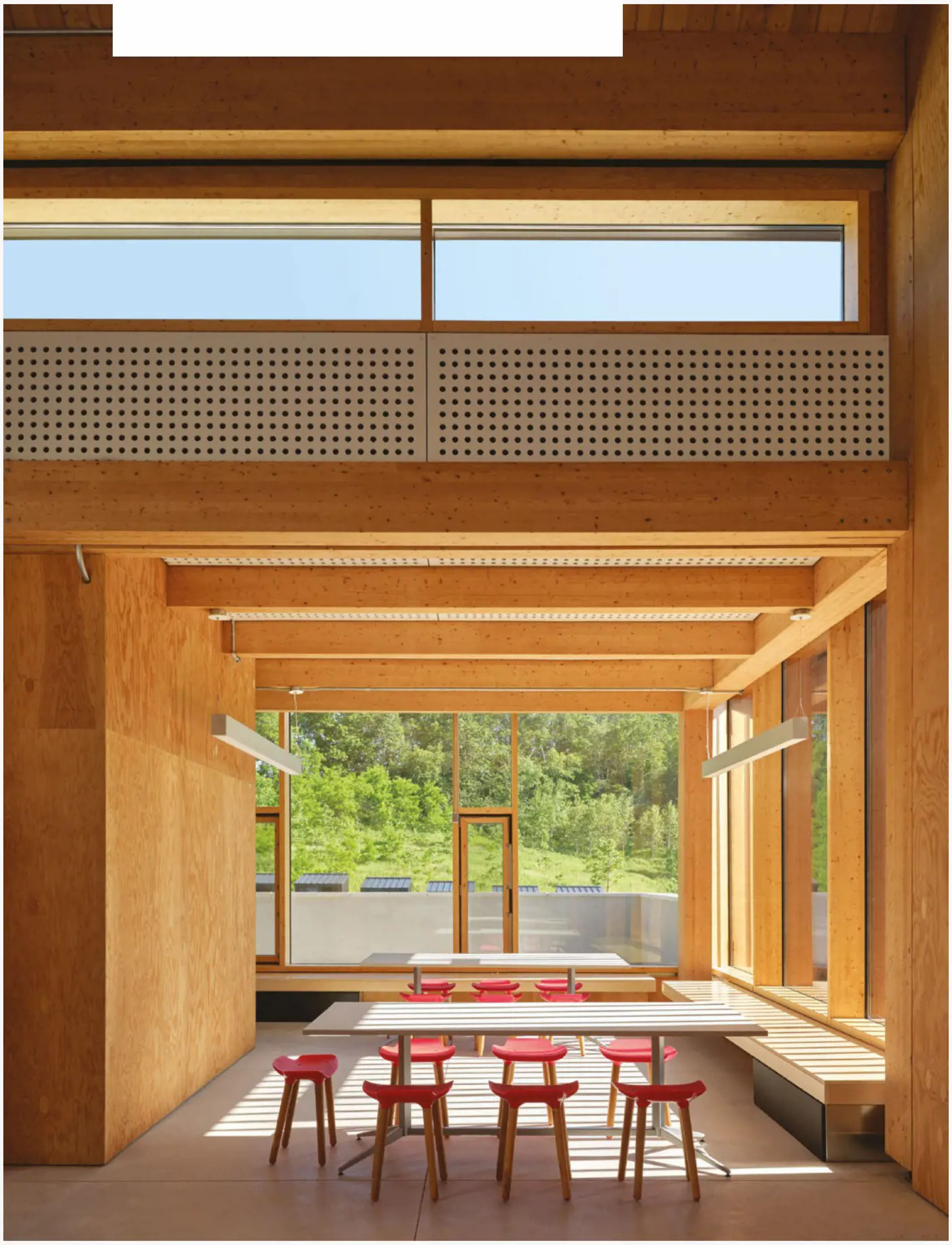


There's a science to it all, but also a beauty." The new "barns" work the same way. At the Koffler Scientific Reserve, the glazed gaps in the wooden cladding open up to the automated windows in both the dining and dormitory volumes, adapting vernacular principles to a contemporary context.

Inside, this translates into surprisingly soulful spaces. In the open dining hall and refectory, the simple wood cladding and carefully proportioned window openings create an energetic yet calming ambiance, while the tall, slanted ceiling fosters an almost cathedral-like setting. It is a casual, rustic, ordinary, uplifting and profoundly sophisticated space. In my estimation, it is already one of the canonic rooms of 21st-century Canadian design. At the end of the hall, a small classroom provides a traditional learning space to supplement fieldwork.

The tall commons volume overlooks a courtyard; dormitories and bathrooms are located on the other side of the quad. In between, a central wood-panelled circulation corridor is paired with a generous mud room. On the far side of the C-shaped building, and tucked into a corner that summertime bunkie residents can access via a separate entrance, are the shared bathrooms. Here, the visual language of light wood and linear geometry gives way to a sinuous white composition inspired by the form of an amoeba under the microscope. Down the hall is a row of five bedrooms, each boasting four beds; every suite is fronted by an angled entryway that creates a subtle but palpable separation between public and private zones.

The building's blackened wood, sleek glass and crisp angles convey an assertively contemporary aesthetic.

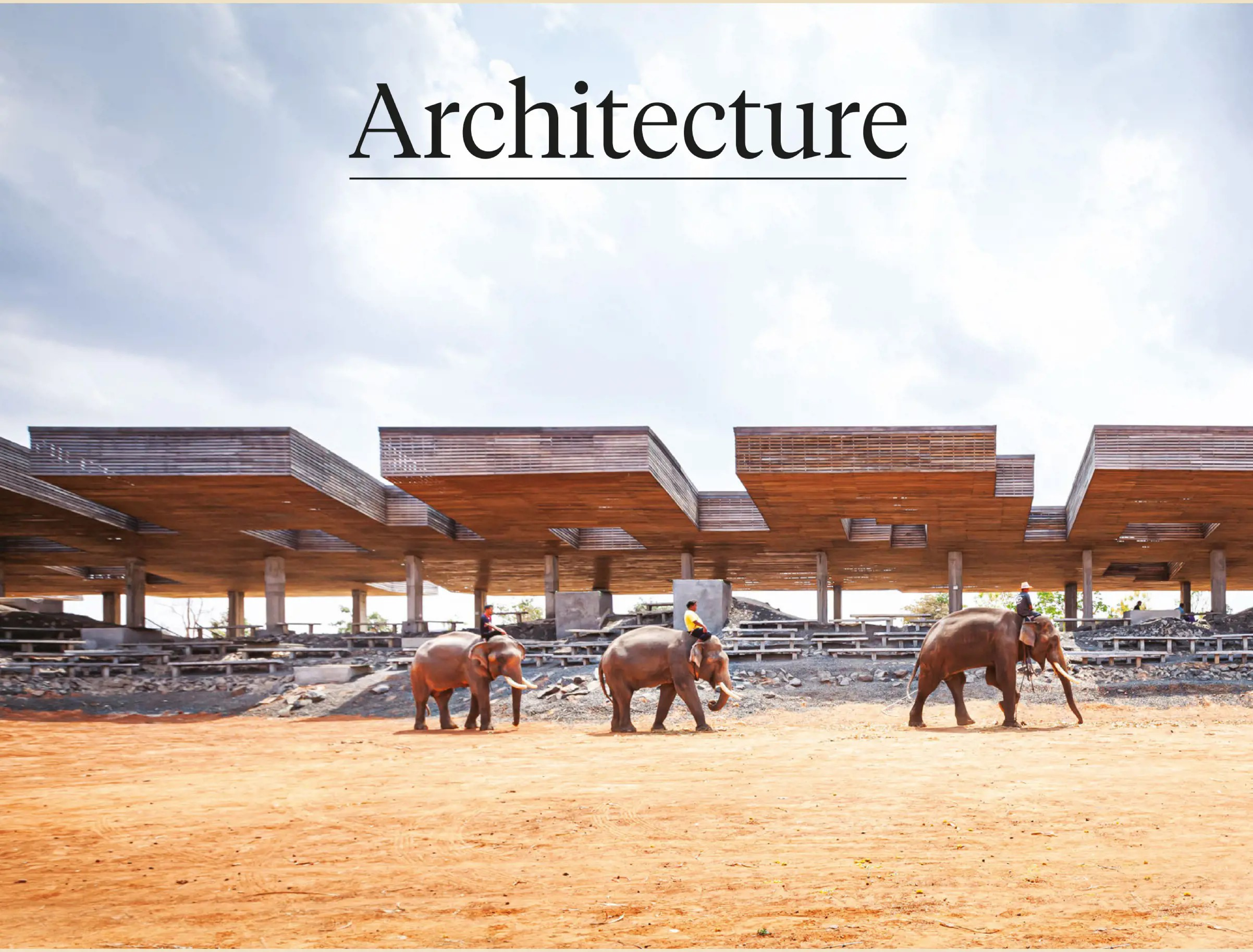


The residential hallway is framed by a long bench that hugs the windows. On the other side of the glass, another bench embraces the courtyard, contouring the whole building in welcoming, sociable seating. This gesture — an elegant Montgomery Sisam signature used to similarly good effect downtown at the University of Toronto's Myhal Centre for Engineering — dissolves the hard boundary between indoor and outdoor space but eschews the more common (and typically less effective) strategy of simply glazing the entire ground level.

Outside, Montgomery Sisam's 20 little bunkies echo the building's angular blackened wood aesthetic in miniature. Each of the structures — which were small enough to forgo building permits — is topped by a solar panel, while the simple interior comprises bunk beds and a compact desk. The bunkies themselves are arranged in a rectilinear pattern, quietly repeating the courtyard form within a natural setting.

For Bob Davies, this play of scales forms the project's philosophical core. Standing in nature's courtyard, surrounded by bunkies, he explains the project's genesis. The site — which offers prime stargazing — is at once a vessel for the grandness of the heavens and a haven for microbial research, a practice referenced in the bathroom's amoebic form. "It's a place for both the telescope and the microscope," he tells me. Then, he speaks the opening lines of William Blake's "Auguries of Innocence," a poem he committed to memory in his youth, and one that returned to him decades later in these woods north of Toronto: "To see the world in a grain of sand / And heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand / And eternity in an hour." His recitation is pitch-perfect.

Architecture



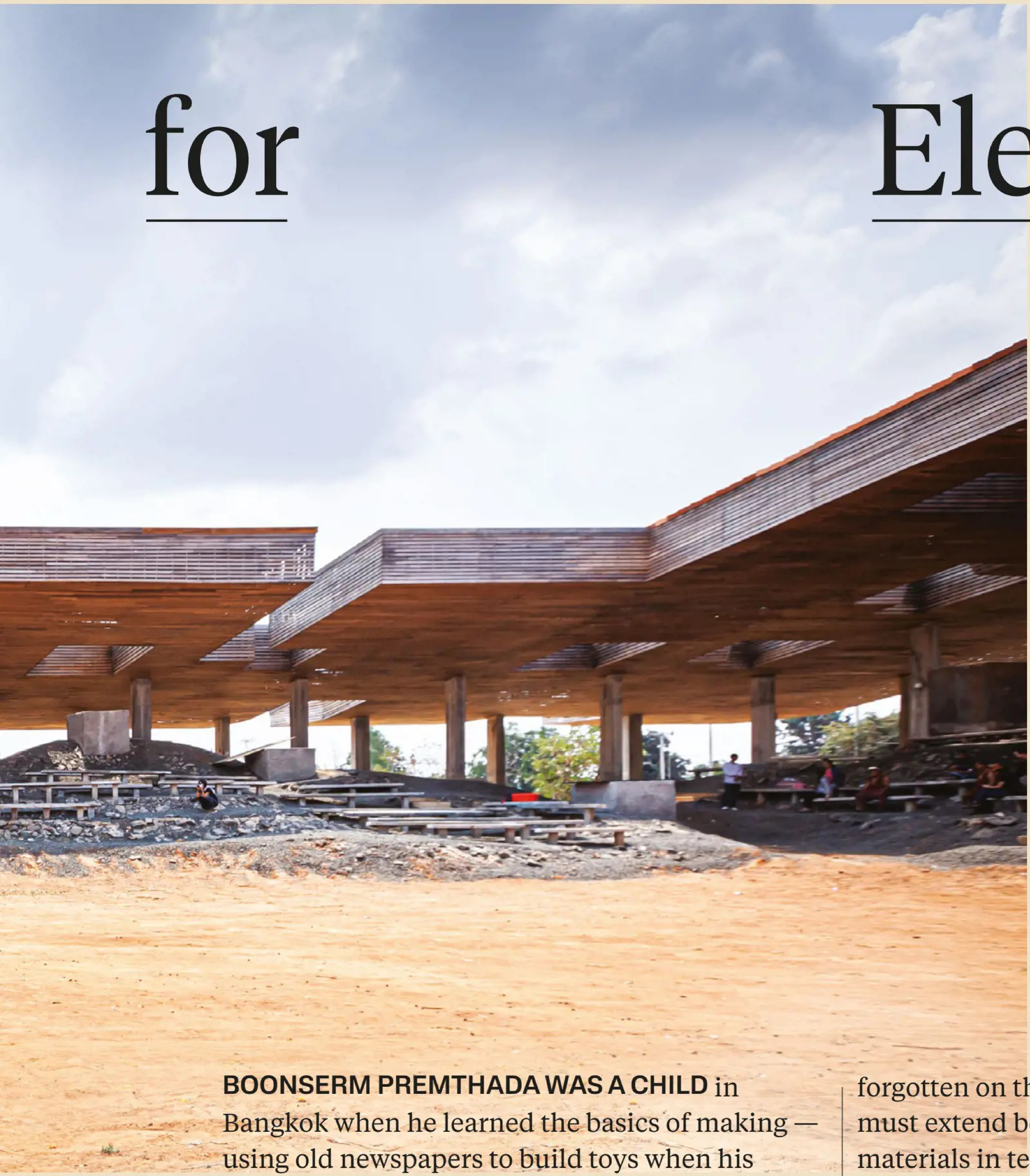
As the Bangkok-based visionary behind the Elephant World project, **Boonserm Premthada** seeks to build an architecture that embraces the wild and breathes new life into natural materials. His standout installations in Venice and Milan might just spread his ideas globally

Interview by BIANCA WEEKO MARTIN

Photography by SPACESHIFT STUDIO

ABOVE: The Cultural Courtyard at the Elephant World project, on a sprawling site north of Surin, Thailand, features a 100-metre-long roof over an open space that hosts ceremonies from birth to death — for humans and elephants. The 1.5-metre-thick roof is supported by concrete pillars; the mounds of soil on the ground are bolstered by basalt stones.

for Elephants

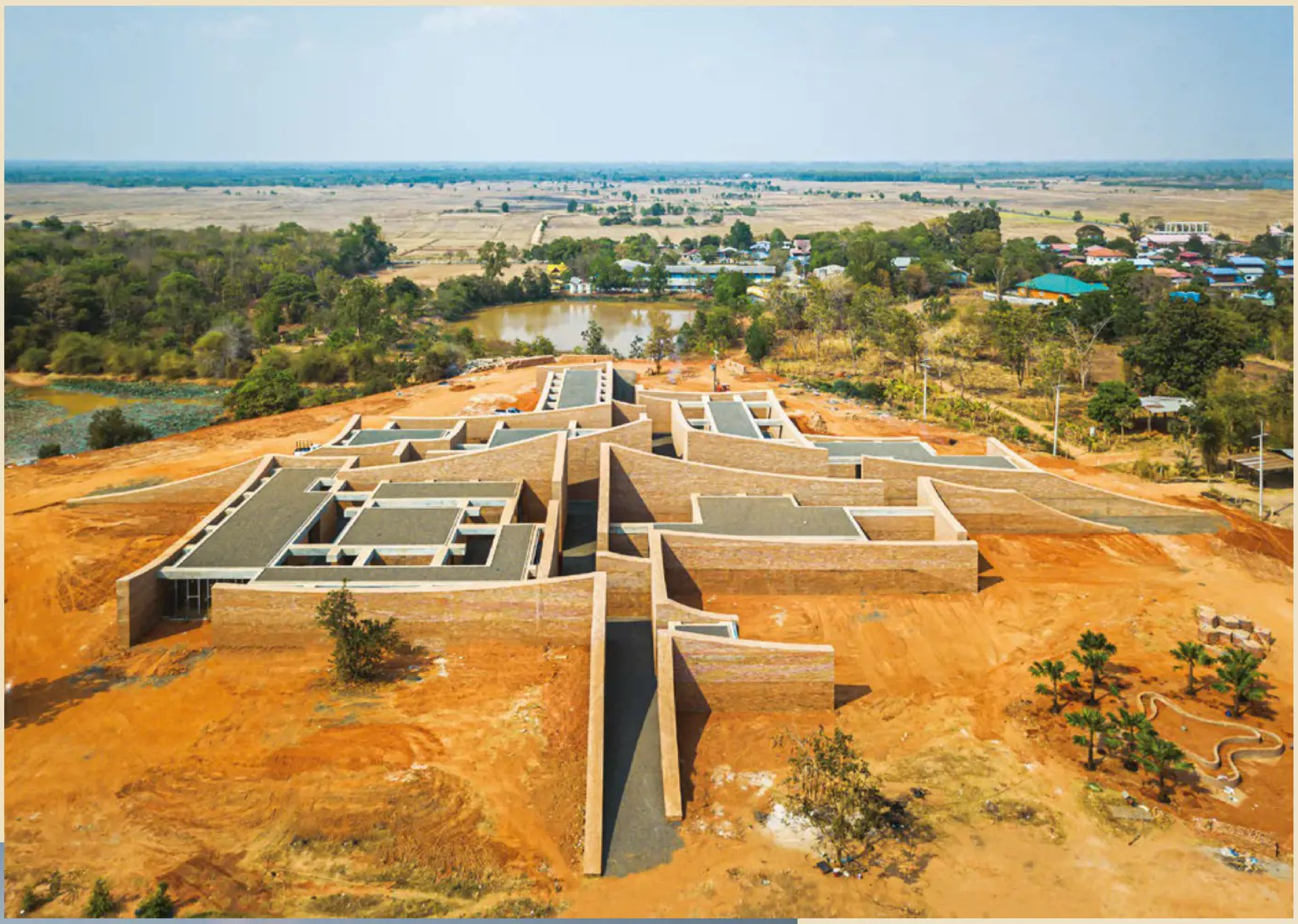


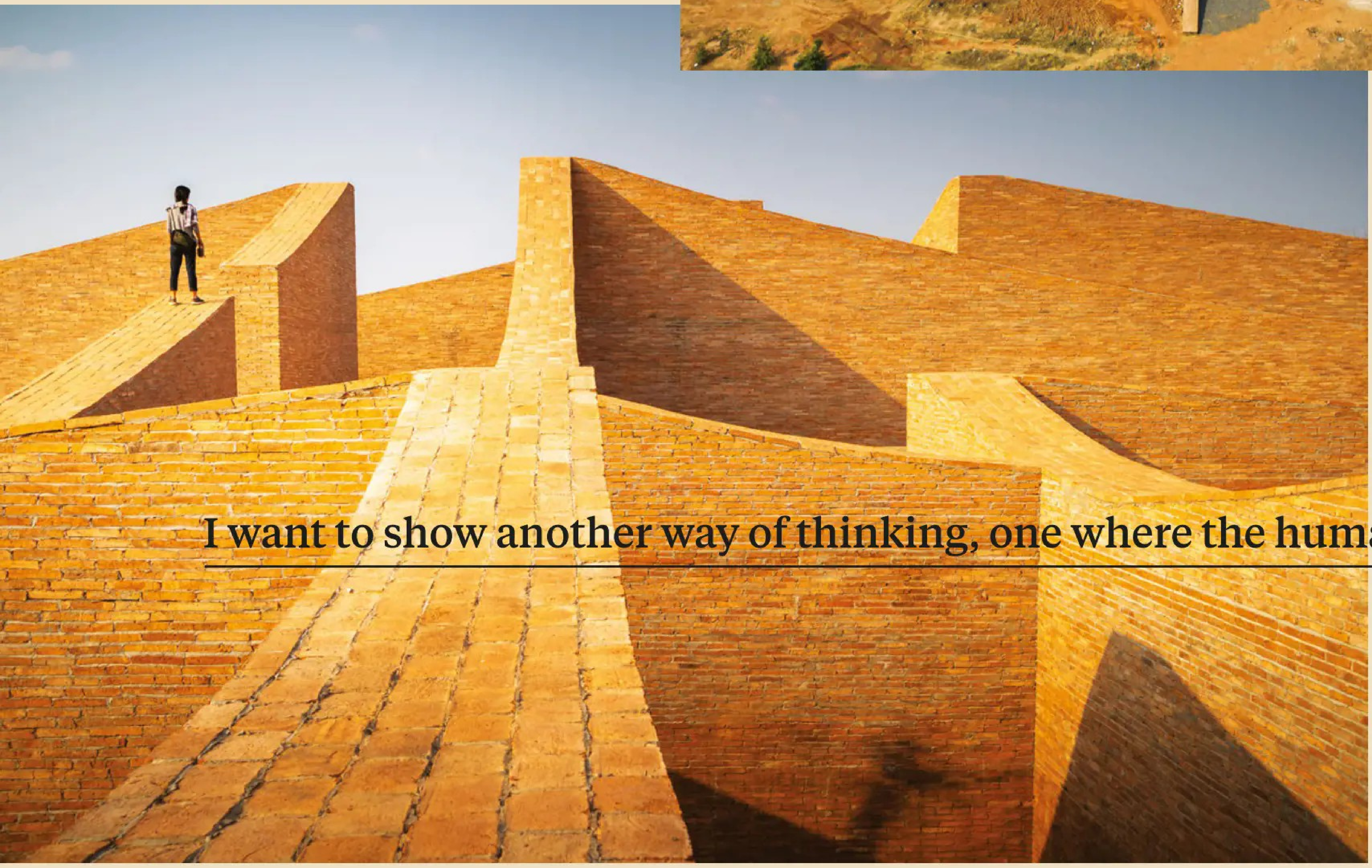
BOONSERM PREMTHADA WAS A CHILD in Bangkok when he learned the basics of making — using old newspapers to build toys when his family couldn't afford them. He describes the place where he grew up as a slum; it was within this survival-oriented environment that he discovered imagination's power to break barriers. "My approach to my practice doesn't come from theory; it comes from the soul," Premthada tells me.

There's both magic and pragmatism in the Thai architect's work. He defines being "human" not in terms of taxonomy but in the ability to relate more generously to non-human life. He grounds himself in a world where elephants and people live side by side, and in rural sites that sit forgotten on the margins. To him, sustainability must extend beyond green metrics to consider materials in terms of expanded life cycles — measured also by the stimulation of local economies.

The son of a carpenter, Premthada developed an intimate familiarity with traditional materials long before he became an architect and founded Bangkok Project Studio in 2003. Wood taught him precision, as two pieces could not be rejoined after a cutting error. Bricks, central to his Kantana Institute for Film and Animation, he describes as "alive." He was 45 when his first buildings — Code House and Kantana — were completed in 2011. And with both the Milan Triennale and Venice Biennale to his credit in the past year, his vision is expanding far beyond his humble beginnings.

RIGHT: The Elephant Museum emerges from the ground with sloped walls that serve as partitions between outdoor corridors and sheltered rooms such as galleries, the library and other services.





LEFT: The museum's more than 480,000 fired clay bricks, made by hand, employ a technique passed down through generations. The building's construction created jobs for locals while elevating the humble regional material.

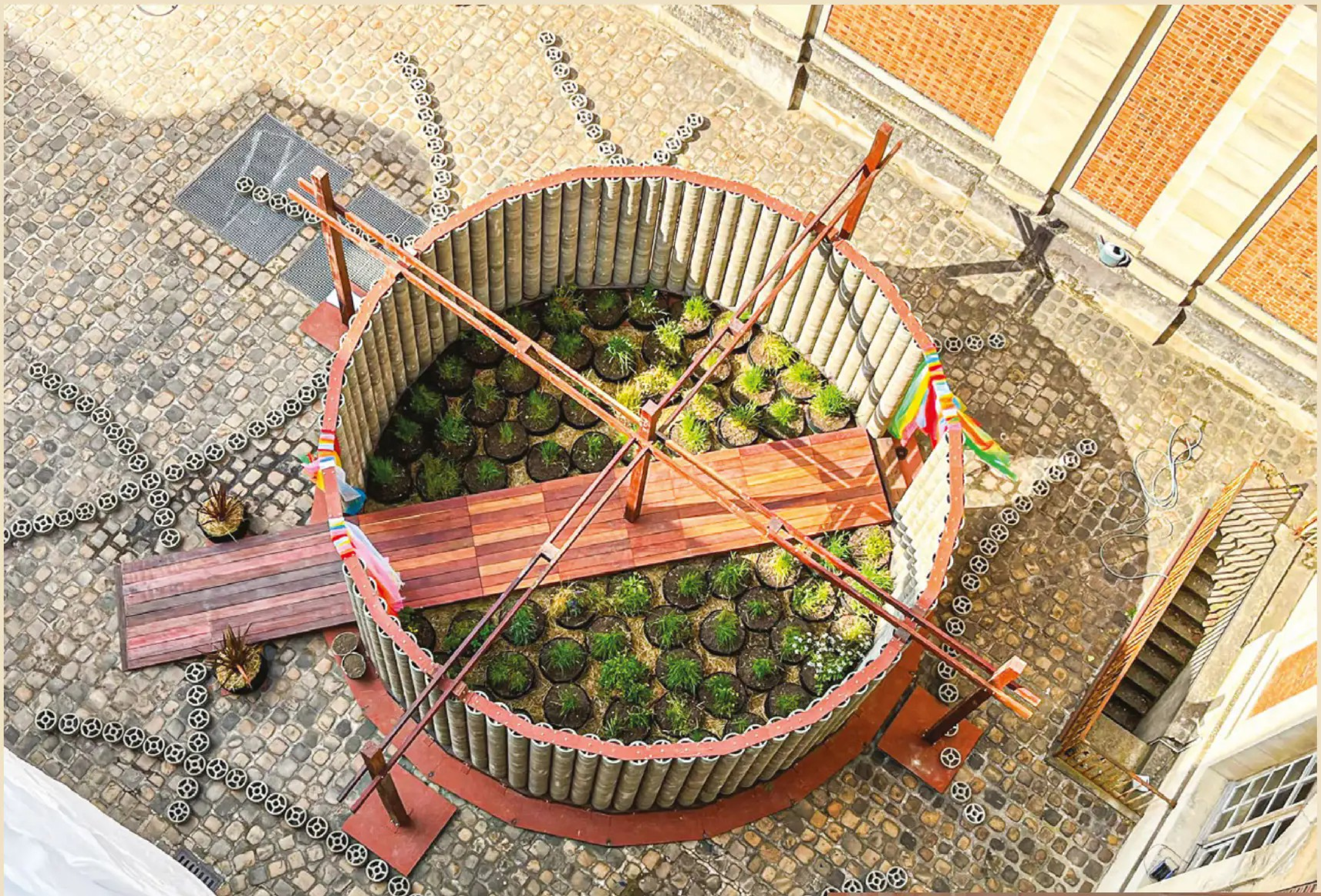
> I want to show another way of thinking, one where the human is not at the centre.

In Elephant World, you explore the relationship between humans and elephants. I thought about the carabao, or water buffalo, which is deeply symbolic in the Philippines. How do animal–human relationships shape your approach to architecture?
In parts of Thailand, humans and elephants have lived together for over four hundred years — sometimes even under the same roof. The elephant isn't just an animal, but family, even something like a god. Thai culture has long recognized this. With their heightened senses of hearing and smell, elephants remind us to expand our own awareness.

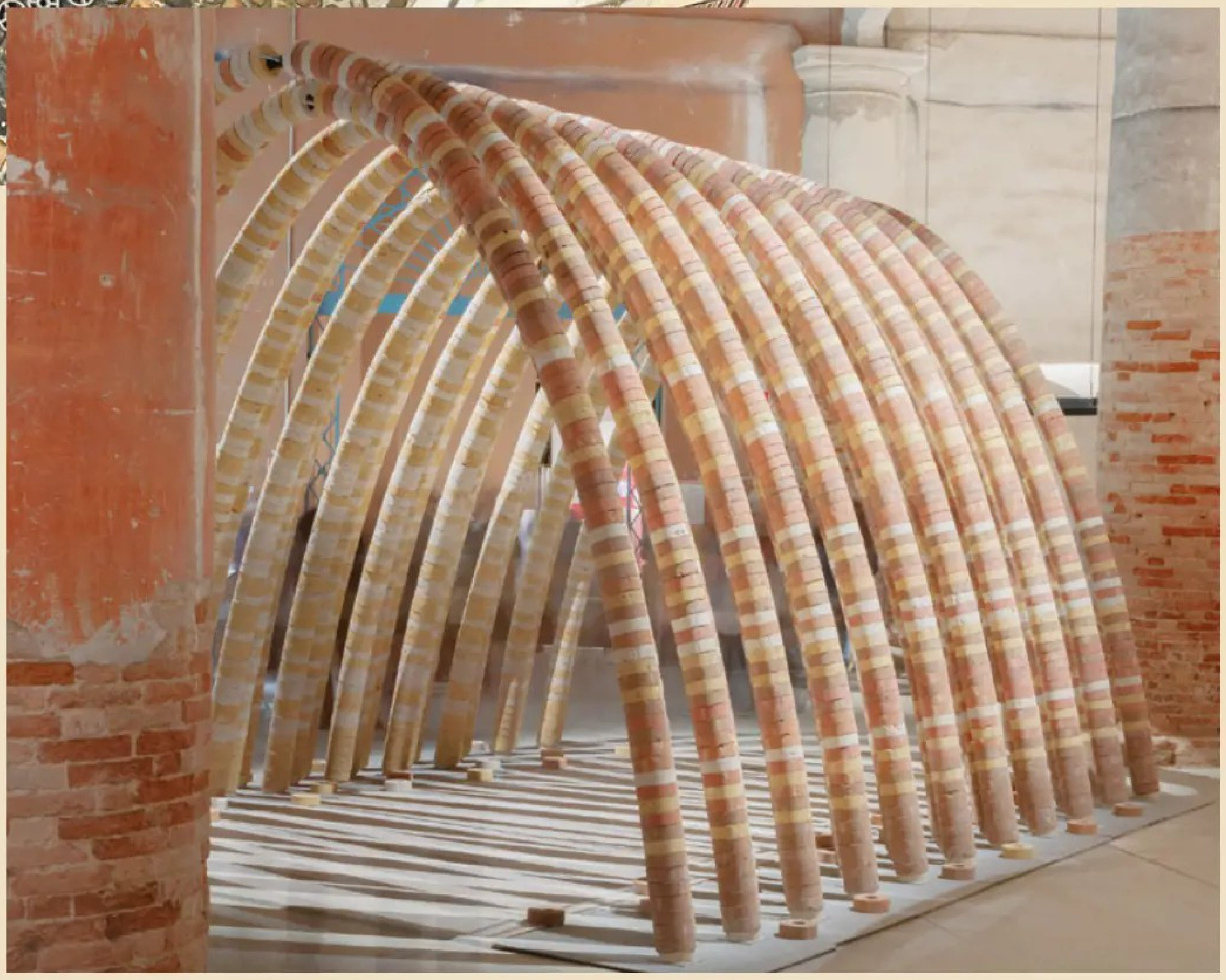
The elephant villages of the Kui in Northeastern Thailand have been suffering food shortages as forests were destroyed and land dried up. The Thai government began an elephant welfare initiative after the animals and their keepers were migrating in large numbers from villages to the city. The government initiative aimed to return elephants to their homeland — preserving culture, reviving forests, and building sustainable economies. This became the foundation for Elephant World, which began in 2015 and finished in 2020. This is a very new challenge in architecture, designing for both the animal and the human, since normally we design just for humans. Elephant World shows what it means to build architecture that is non-human-centric.

Your Venice Biennale project, *Elephant Chapel*, grew out of Elephant World. How did the idea evolve?
After finishing Elephant World, in 2021, I began witnessing elephant populations grow in the villages, and their dung was everywhere — on the roads, outside houses, all around town. I thought, How can I use it? Dung is usually good as fertilizer, but I began experimenting with it as construction material, mixing it with soil, cement, stucco, tree bark and leaves, and pigments from plants to make bricks.

We first used these elephant dung bricks at the Île-de-France Architecture and Landscape Biennial in 2022, and later at the Academy of Art in London,



LEFT: After completing the Elephant World project, Premthada came across an abundance of elephant droppings in the village. So began his ongoing experiment making elephant dung bricks as a construction material. The Elephant Theater Pavilion is a prime example.



BELOW: For the 19th Venice Architecture Biennale (on until November 23), Premthada constructed an archway with the elephant dung discs — giving the material global exposure.

I want to show how we can live together.

with waste from Colchester Zoo and manpower from local volunteers. The elephant dung became an ingredient we could find in London. The method depends on the place and scale of the project.

For the 2025 Venice Biennale, I began thinking about the problems elephants face with climate change. I told the elephant keepers: Collect the dung, sell it to the factory, and use the money to buy or plant food for the elephants. At that time, I was just thinking about how I could help the elephants survive.

The exhibition was answering the prompt, What is intelligence? For me, it's how animal and human intelligence come together and can inspire respect for one another. In Venice, there are many churches and chapels. What would happen if we had a chapel for animals? This became Elephant Chapel.

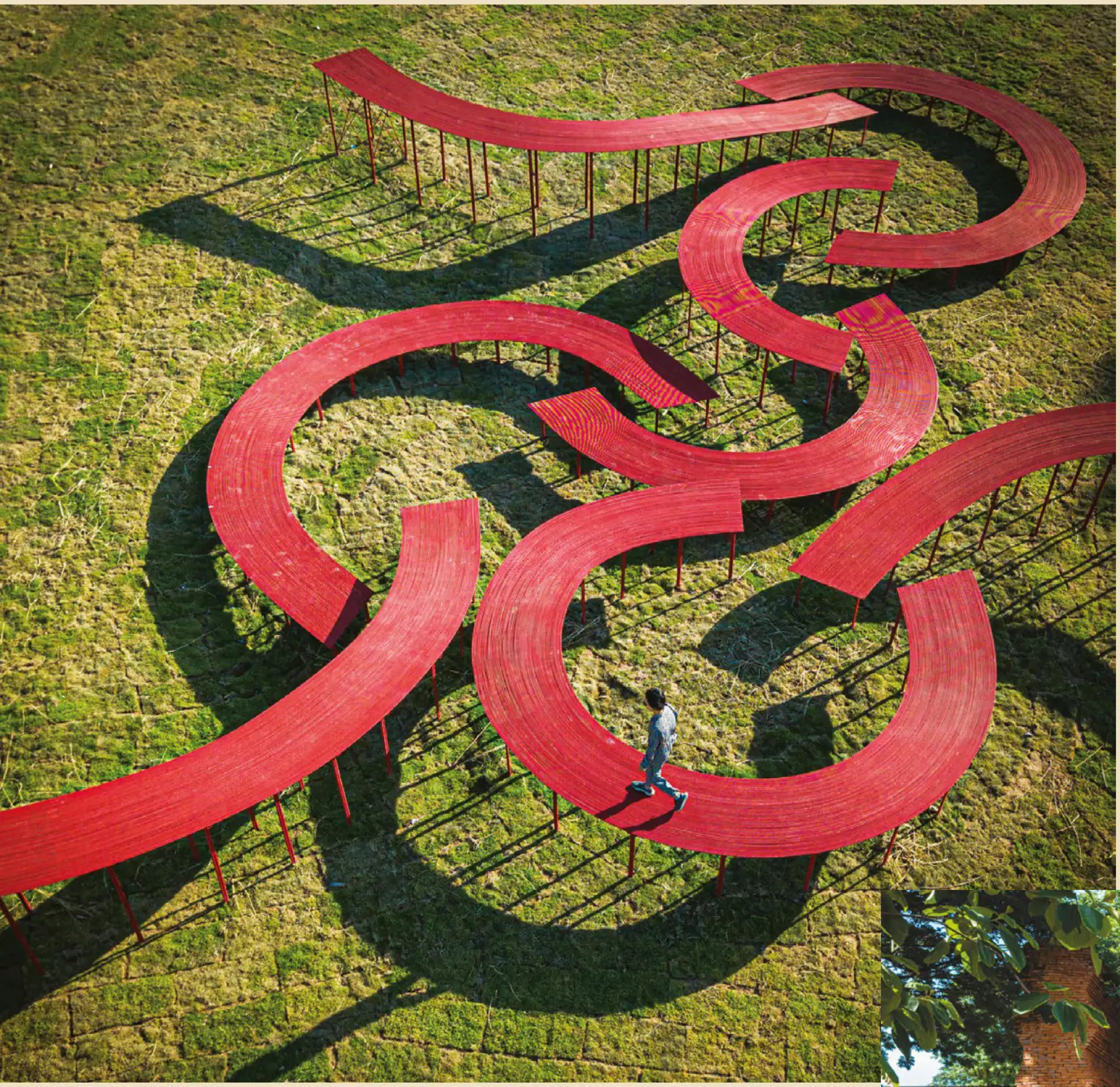
Your experiments with elephant dung bricks and paper propose a localized approach to sustainability. Do you see these methods being applied more widely?

My intention is not to scale up but to apply concrete ideas. I'm interested in life-cycle materials and imagining architecture with life-cycle materials. Not recycled, and not upcycled, because recycling and upcycling are not related to the whole life cycle. They are more concerned with a material's afterlife. To me, scaling up is about holistic thinking.

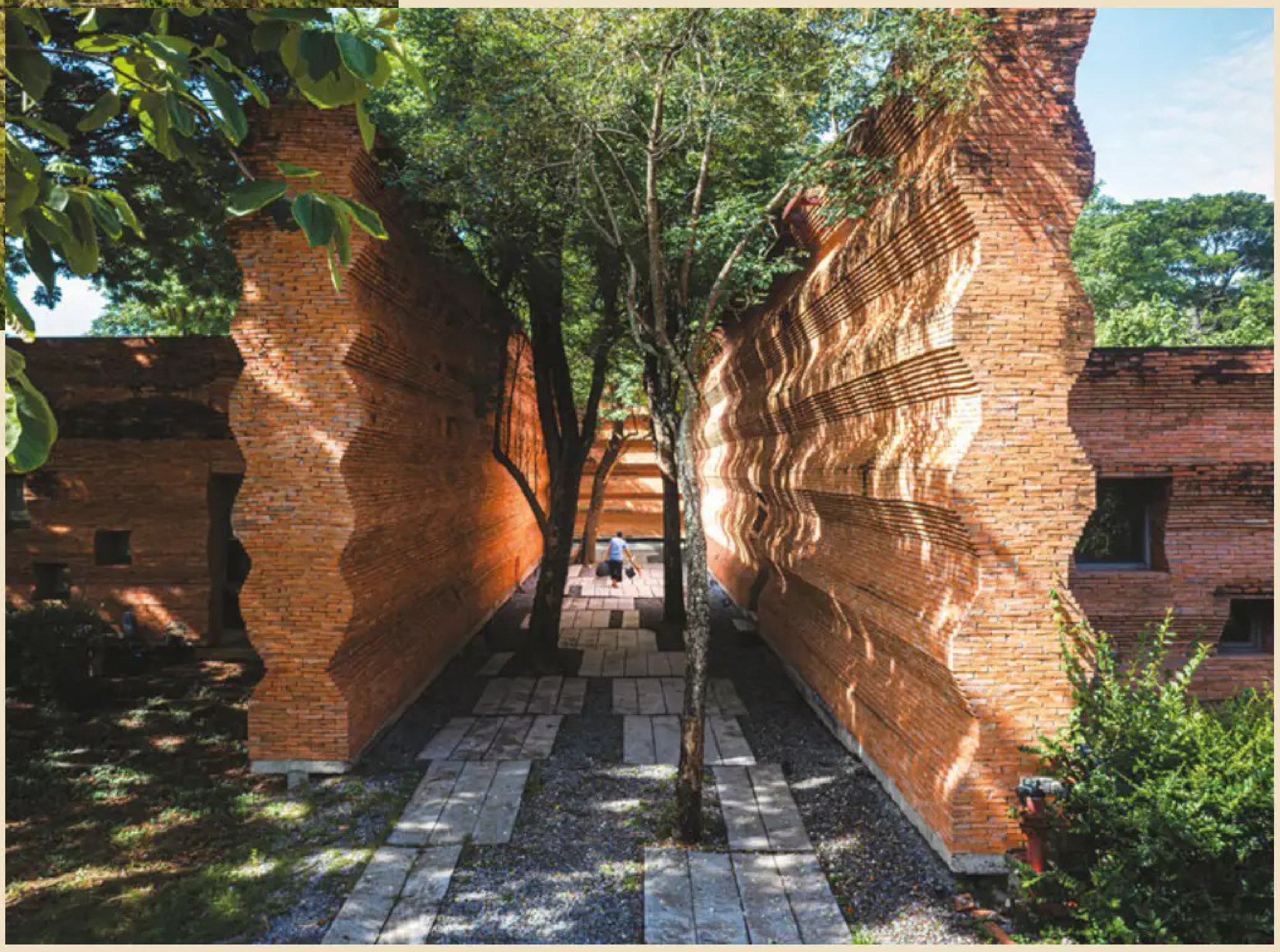
I think of my mother and grandmother, who came from Northeast Thailand. In my grandmother's village, there was no electric power and no public water. For food, there was duck and chicken. If you wanted clothes, you'd have to find silkworms that produce silk fibre. I experienced this very basic life for three months during the summer every year visiting my grandmother. When I look back to that time, I realize I learned a lot about the meaning of sustainability. I didn't know the term and it wasn't in my vocabulary yet, but I think everyone should go back to the basics of living and then apply what they've learned.

I also see your work addressing social sustainability in the context of Southeast Asia,

PHOTO BY SIMONE BOSSI (VENICE)



LEFT: One of Premthada's more whimsical installations, The Walk is an elevated passage of unconnected swirls in The Fields at Siam Country Club, Pattaya, Thailand. It was "conceived with the purpose of helping humans to realize the importance of a small plant like grass and to pay attention to trivial details around them," says the architect.



RIGHT: Completed in 2011, Thailand's Kantana Film and Animation Institute features eight-metre-tall handmade brick walls whose undulating form creates a sense of quiet and calm within.

where rural to urban migration has put pressure on cities like Bangkok. Much of your work is in rural Thailand, not Bangkok. Why focus on these places?

I am based in Bangkok but I have no work in Bangkok! I think Bangkok is complete — it's perfect. Many of my projects are situated in the middle of nowhere. I like that, because I'm interested in what's abandoned. I focus on people with a lack of opportunities, because this is where my background lies. I never forget my background and where I come from. In abandoned or desolate areas, there is a need for architecture to build the place up, and the people who live there.

Architecture cannot exist alone. It has to be about cooperating together, life, local materials, resources — combining this together is the way. In rural contexts, I'm always thinking about how local people need to survive.

As a professor, what do you want the next generation of architects to carry forward into the future?

As an educator, people ask me: Boonserm, how do you teach your students? I tell them that the only thing I want to teach the younger generations is how to be human. You can be a good student of architecture and design, but if you are not a good human, and you're not listening, you won't have a reason to build something. The work has no soul.

I ask my students, Do you think it makes sense? When the world has many conflicts going on, you need to make something that makes sense. If it makes sense, you can do it. Whether in Thailand or the rest of the world, there is no architecture that is better than the other. No one is better than another. Everyone is important. This is the lesson I teach to my students, and to the young architects of the world — I think this is the future we need.

There are many theories offered at the school of architecture. I want to show another way of thinking, one where the human is not at the centre. I want to show how we can live together. This is my philosophy from my childhood until now. AZ

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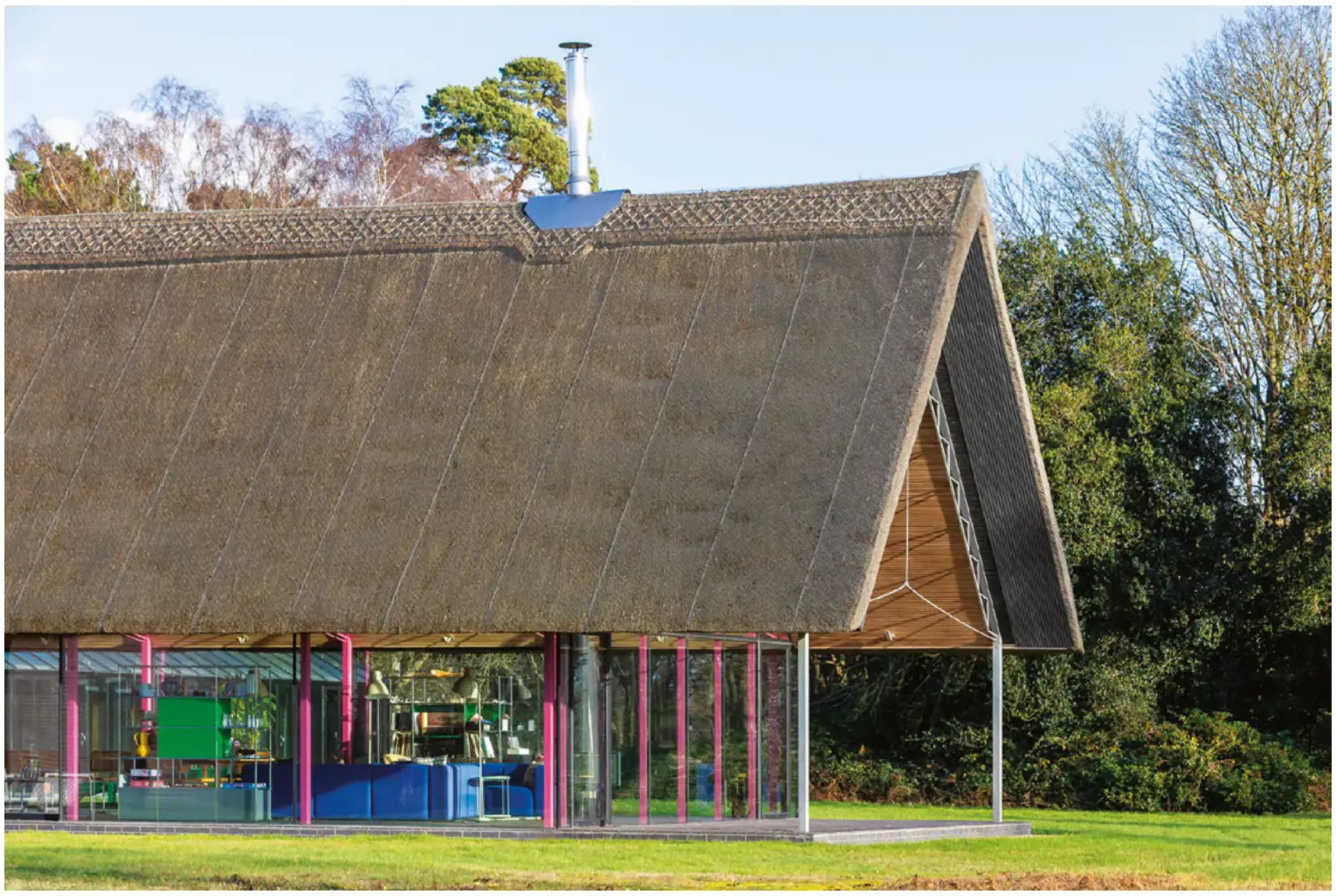
Thatch Amore

The founders of U.K. firm Sanei + Hopkins composed Housestead, their cruciform home in the Suffolk coastal heathland, by juxtaposing old and new, high-tech and agrarian. The result: a rural-living paradise

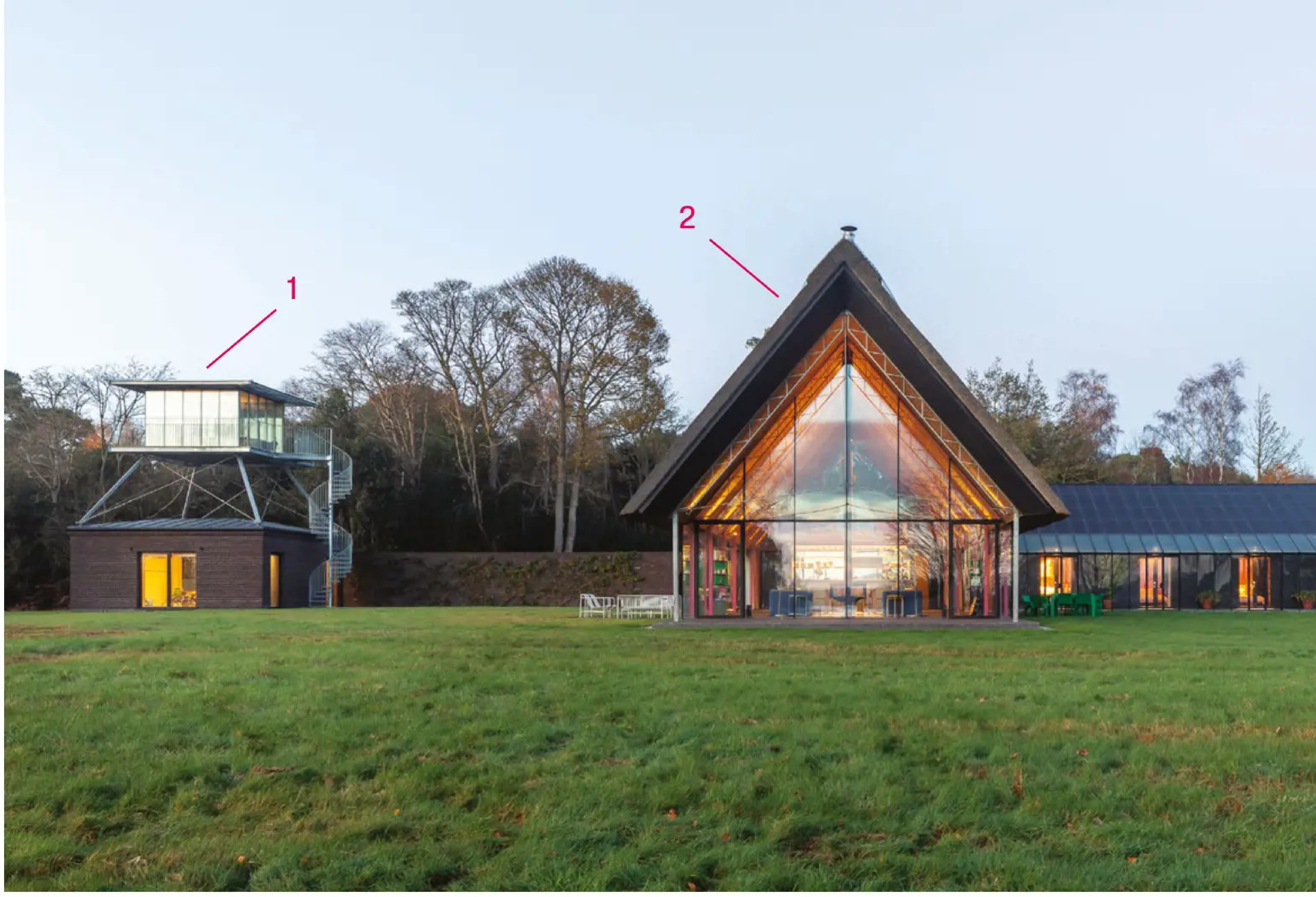


story by
GIOVANNA DUNMALL

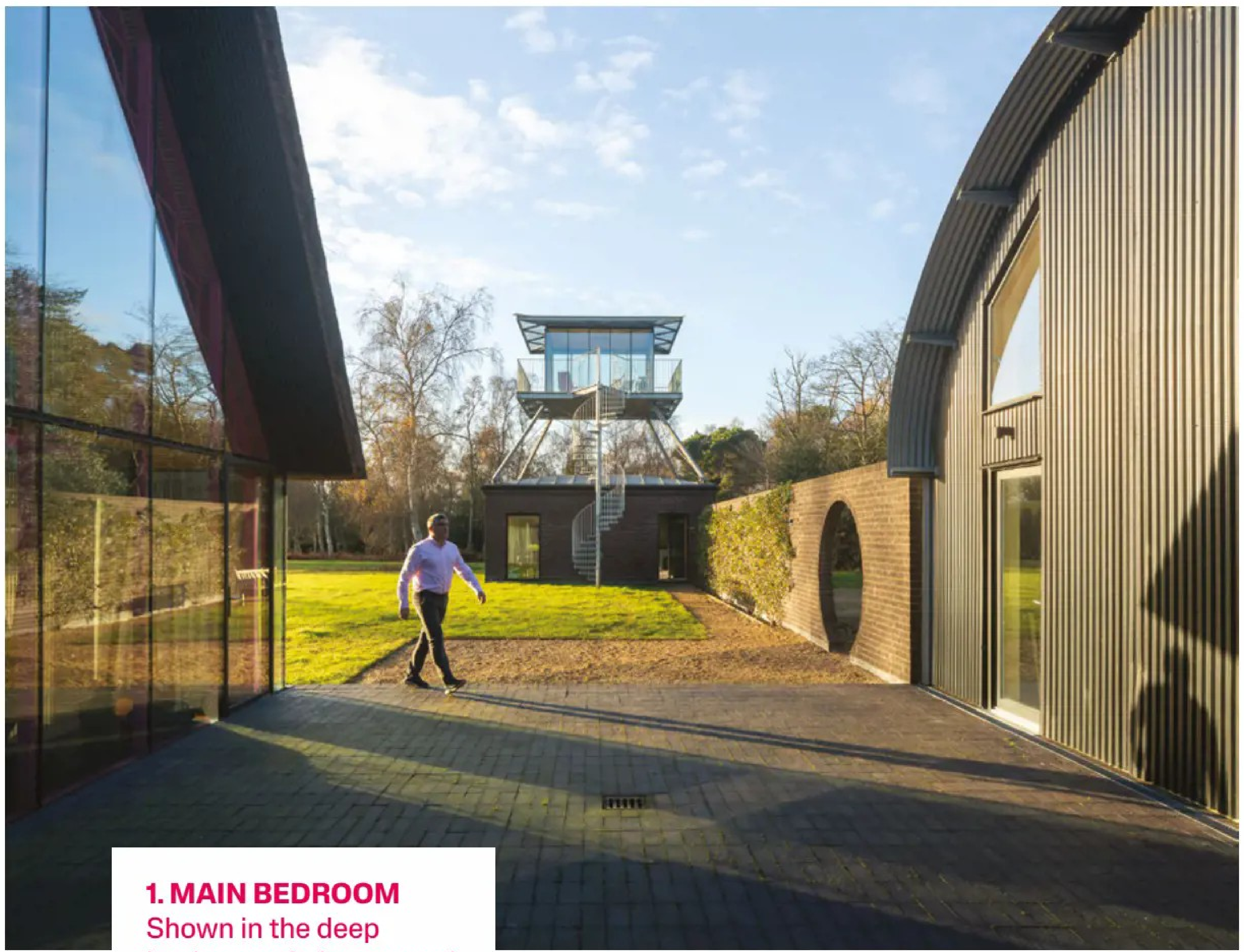
photography by
PETER LANDERS

One of the residence's four volumes, the farmhouse features wraparound glazing and a thatched roof laid by David Rackham, whose family has included thatchers for over 14 generations. The home, say the architect–owners, is "embedded in landscape, history and future care."

TO GO TO AMIR SANEI AND ABIGAIL HOPKINS'S new home on a vast and historic estate in coastal Suffolk, you drive through wooded grounds and past Victorian buildings and structures, eventually arriving at an opening with a utilitarian shed and a dark brick wall featuring a "moon gate." It is only once you have walked through this circular arch that the dwelling's unique configuration — and the expansive and somewhat mystical landscape of heathland and marshy waters below — are revealed. Composed of four geometrically different, discrete and defined volumes arranged off a central courtyard, Housestead (as the home is called) is both strikingly contemporary and richly context-driven, offering a potential blueprint for contemporary rural living and building.



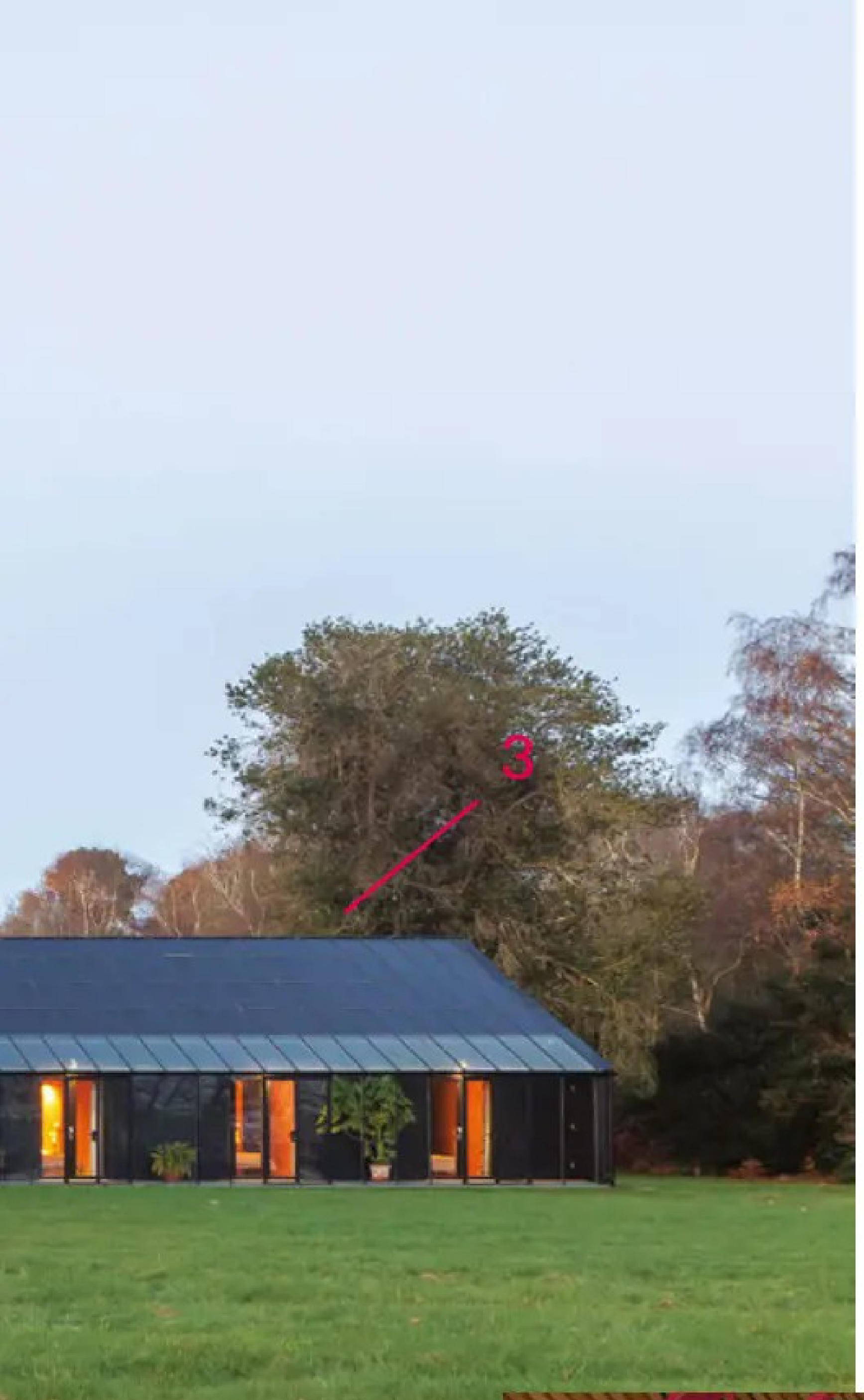
"Using the analogy of the farmstead, where every structure has a different function, we allocated different functions to each volume," explains Amir Sanei, who co-founded London-based practice Sanei + Hopkins alongside his wife, Abigail. There's the utility building with its curved and corrugated hangar-like roof, the single-storey sleeping quarters for their children, made of prefabricated structurally insulated panels and locally sourced larch, and the south-facing main "farmhouse," with its wraparound windows topped by an overhanging pitched thatched roof that "gives the single-storey building presence," explains Hopkins. The fourth "object" is the couple's main brick bedroom, above which they've perched a fully glazed elevated study that is accessed via a winding external steel staircase. These last two structures borrow from the geometric language of the wartime pillboxes and observation towers one finds in Suffolk, and the study also pays tribute to the water tower that once existed by the main house. It is also, importantly, "the one place where you can look at the amazing landscape from above," Sanei says.



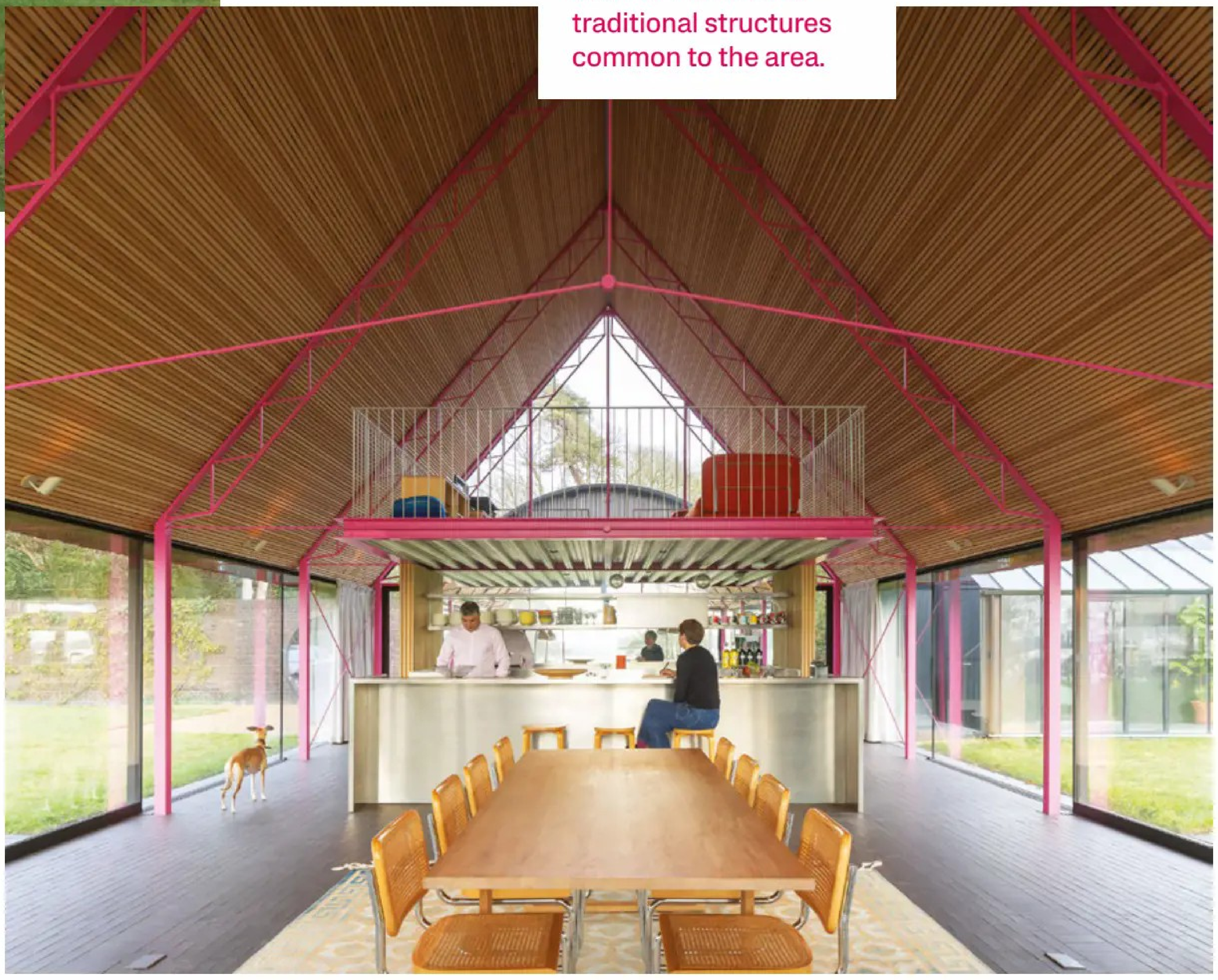
1. MAIN BEDROOM
Shown in the deep background, the owners' brick bedroom volume props up a glazed, folly-like study accessed via an outdoor spiral stair. The home's entrance, meanwhile, is via the moon gate wall off the corrugated metal–clad utility structure.

Creating a 21-metre-long thatched roof on top of a sleek contemporary structure grew out of a desire to reference local and agricultural architectural vernacular wherever possible on the project, and gently push boundaries in terms of ideas, material combinations and aesthetics. The so-called "living" block pays tribute to the 16th-century Suffolk long house, which was often a place where the community would meet, explains Hopkins. And the thatch is made the traditional Suffolk way, out of water reed from the local marshes rather than the more common straw. It also plays a part in the project's un-shouty but nevertheless impressive sustainability credentials: By combining a 300-millimetre-thick thatch with insulation of approximately the same depth, the building achieved a U-value of 1.0, despite its glass facade. In the same vein, the east "sleeping block" roof is covered in PV panels, and its outer wall, clad in black-painted timber, looks out onto a glassed-in "winter garden," creating a so-called Trombe wall effect where heat is captured and released into the space.

Sanei and Hopkins first got the idea for Housestead when they outgrew their two-bedroom annex cottage on this



2. LIVING AREA
The south-facing farmhouse anchors Housestead. It features the main communal living quarters, including a stainless-steel kitchen below a mezzanine. The volume's pink-painted columns and trusses hearken back to the hues of traditional structures common to the area.



160-hectare Suffolk estate, which Hopkins's architect parents had purchased in the late 1990s. The plan was to move to a slightly larger building on the estate, Middle Lodge, but it was dilapidated and too small for the couple and their five children. Eventually, after batting around countless schemes for how to extend it, they decided to seek permission to demolish the original dwelling and replace it with a new, larger one. In the end, however, the couple were encouraged by an enlightened conservation officer to keep Middle Lodge (it was later restored by Abigail's mother) — and instead build something new and innovative elsewhere on the estate under a clause in planning policy known back then as Paragraph 55. More exciting than it sounds, this clause allows for the construction of new houses in the countryside where, among other things, the "exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design...helps to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas."

The layout and composition of the structures grew naturally from how the family lived and occupied various shelters around the estate. "We spent a lot of time in the courtyard opposite the annex we lived in, as well as in my parents' home [in the estate's main house] for meals, so we were constantly going from one building to another," explains Hopkins, whose sister also lives on the property. "When we came to thinking about how we would want to live, moving between different buildings and being outdoors a lot seemed very normal to us." On farms, the buildings look inward in order to shelter animals and keep them safe; Sanei and Hopkins instead decided to turn everything outward toward the surrounding landscapes and orient the volumes to the path of the sun.

Though sparing and rigorous in its language and materiality, there is also plenty of whimsy to be found in Housestead. The living area, for instance, with its robust thatched roof and glazed walls, is supported by slim steel columns and trusses engineered down to their finest size to allow for uninterrupted views that bring the outside in. The trusses are painted bright pink in an upbeat nod to the "Suffolk pink" lime-washed homes in the area, as well as the strong chromaticism of the high-tech genre pioneered by Hopkins Architects, the practice co-founded by Abigail's parents in the '70s. The moon gate entrance playfully frames the terrace and view to come while the utility shed features three circular firewood log stores made of corrugated galvanized steel sheets; the latter arrived on site in the wrong gauge and were later bent into shape by a local company that makes pigpens. The study that floats above the brick west wing bedroom is the most unexpected and adventurous part of the project. "It's something that initially you might have thought is a folly — and do we really need it?" acknowledges Sanei. "Now, it makes perfect sense." Like the other elements that make up Housestead, it has a geographical and architectural raison d'être, but also a seductive experimental quality.

3. KIDS' QUARTERS
The children's bedrooms reside in a low-slung, greenhouse-like structure that extends from the farmhouse. The building envelope integrates photovoltaics and thermal technologies, and the material palette is warm and rustic.

Our guides to the newest furniture, finishes, building materials and more

SPEC SHEETS

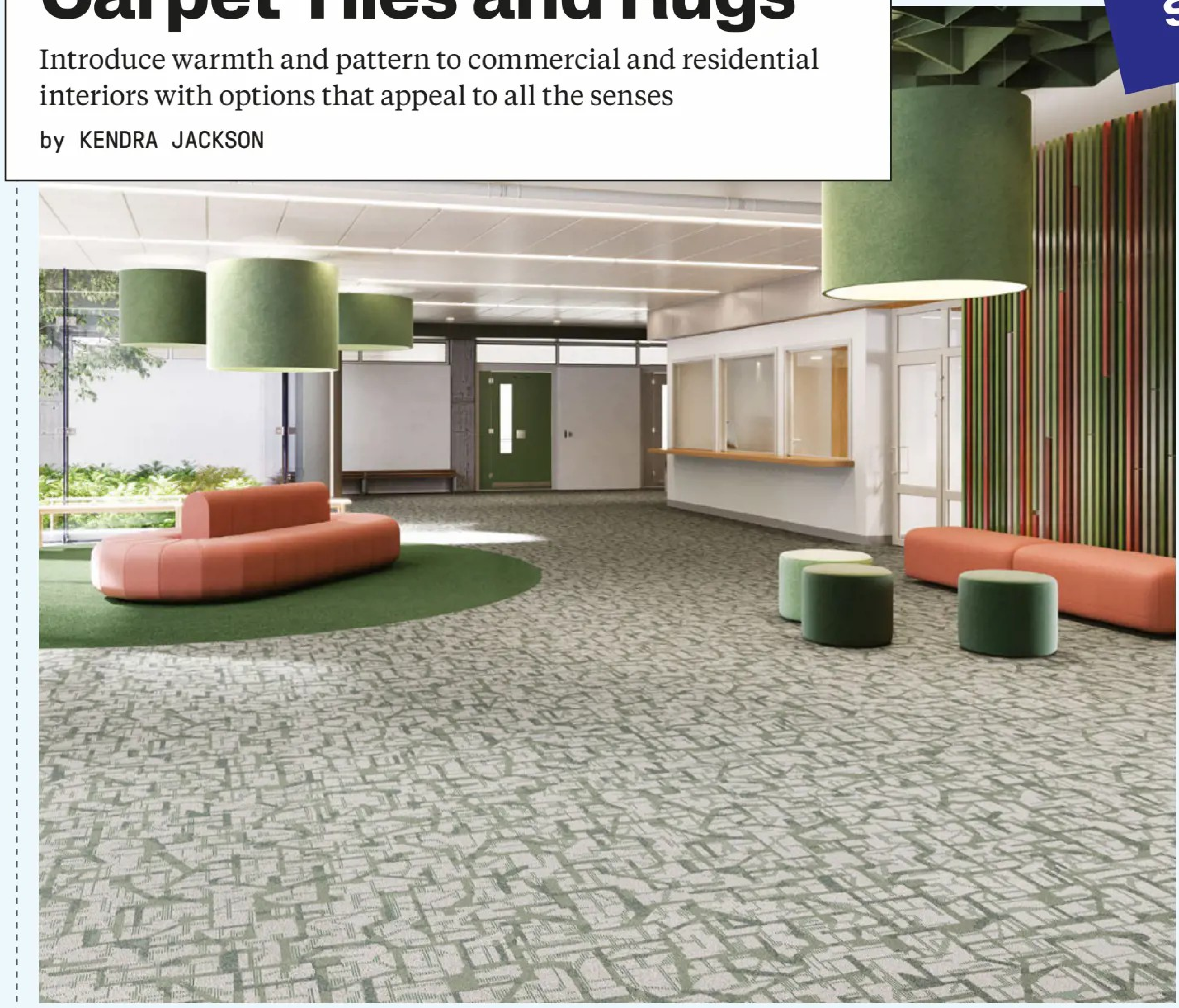
PRODUCTS

Carpet Tiles and Rugs

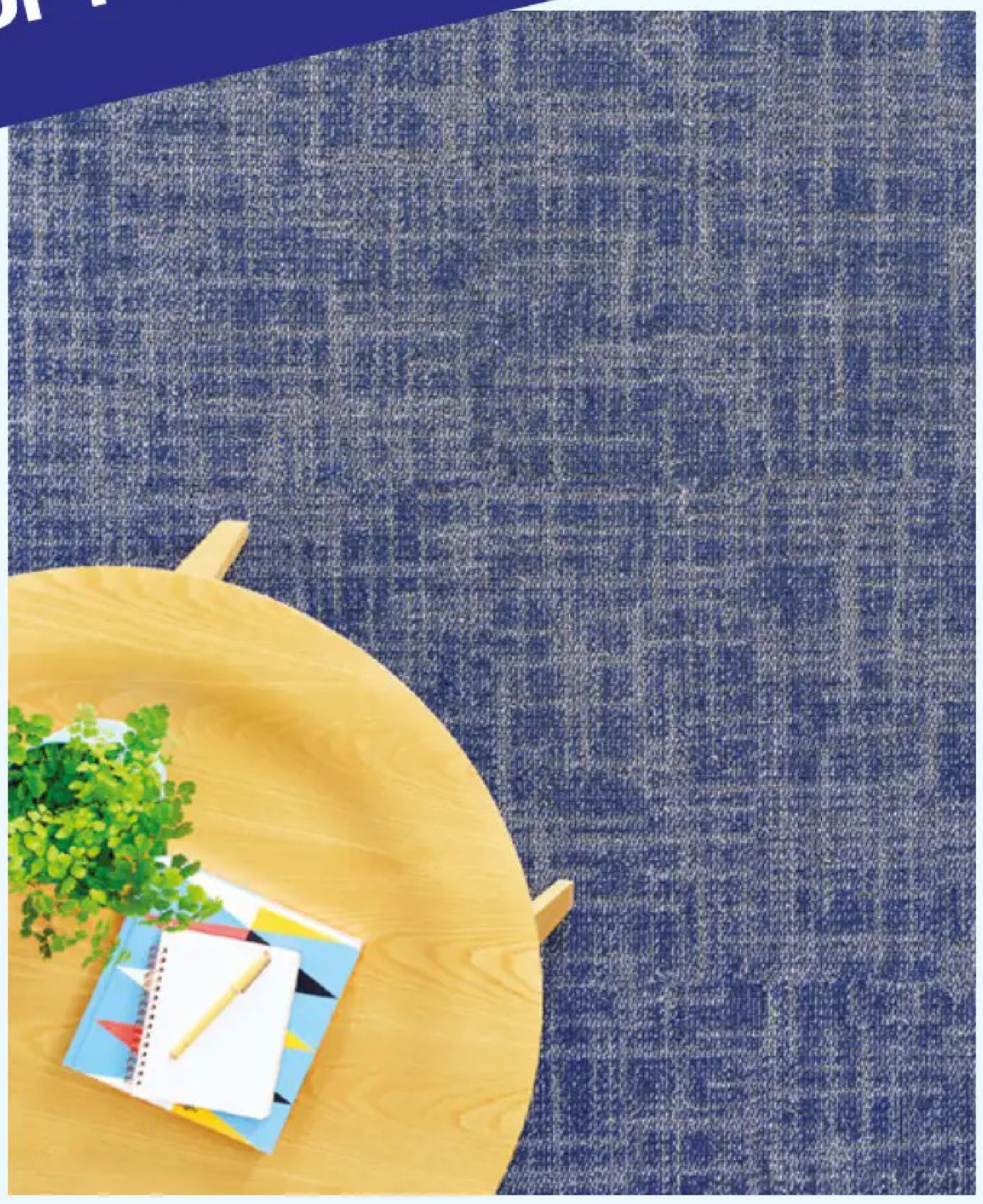
Introduce warmth and pattern to commercial and residential interiors with options that appeal to all the senses

by KENDRA JACKSON

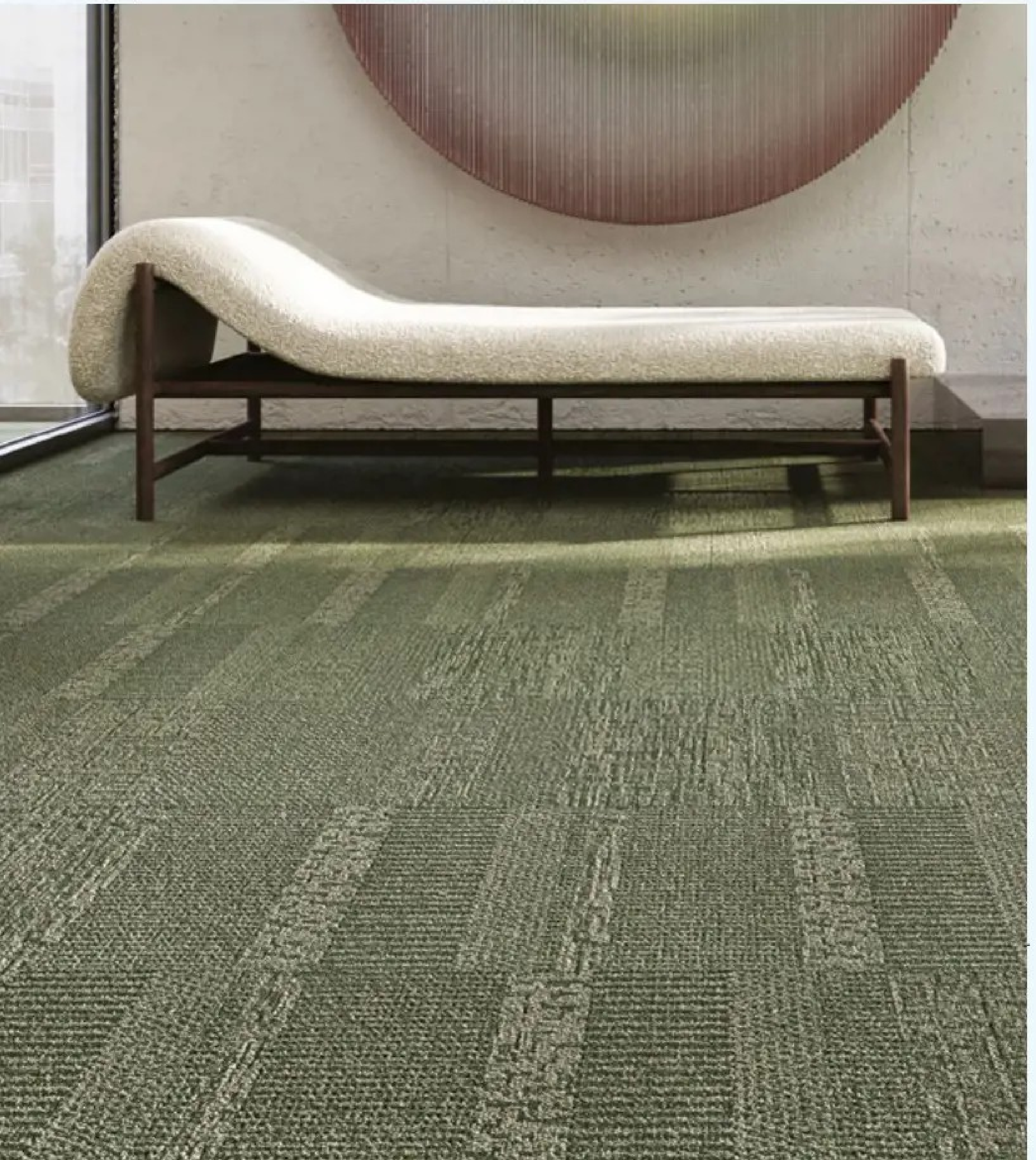
SOFT COLOUR



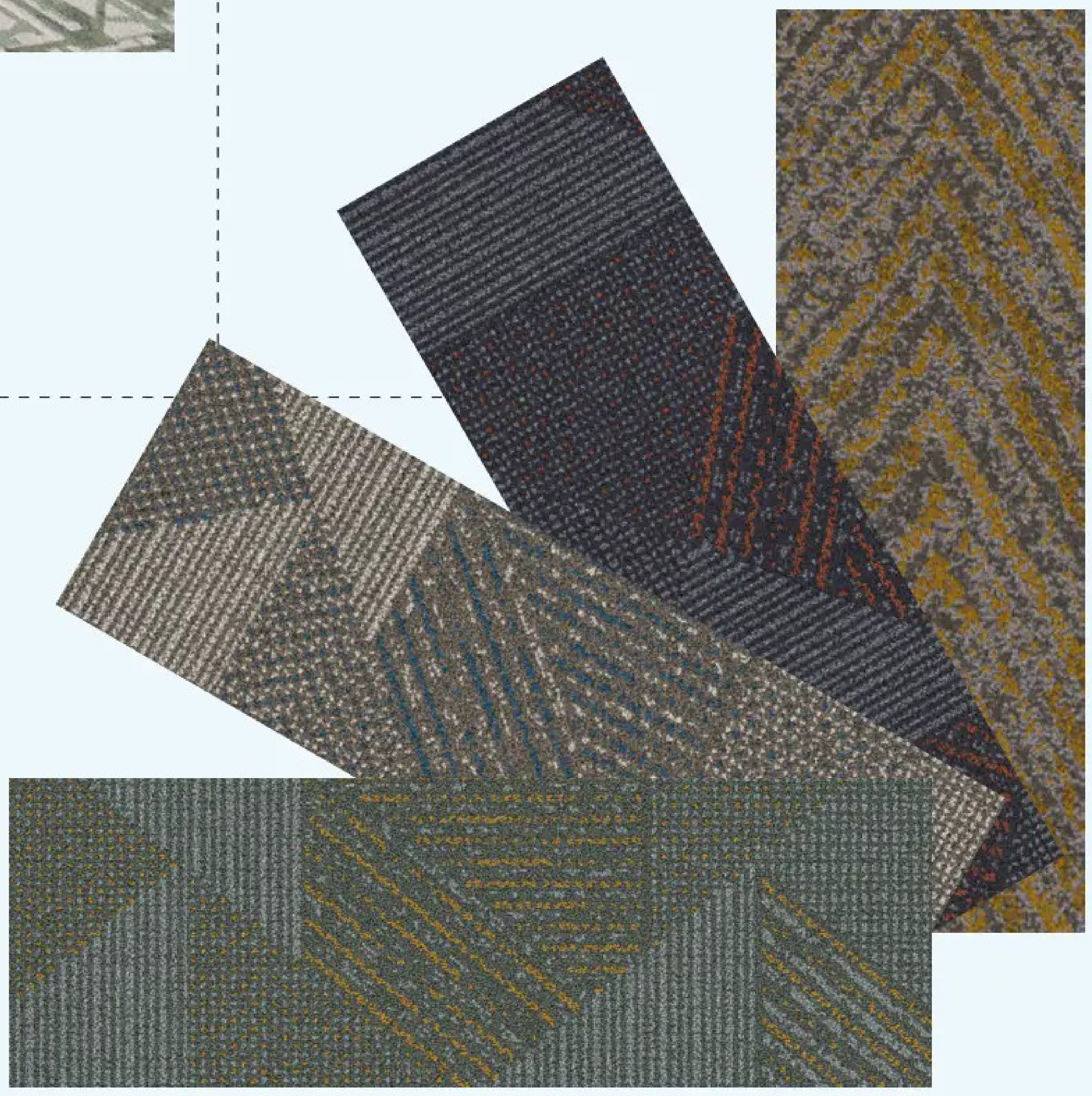
Angled in Enrichment
Defined by geometric shapes and lines, **Tarkett**'s Angled in Enrichment collection brings both balance and structure to educational (and other) settings. The series includes three Powerbond hybrid carpets and three modular carpet tiles, and the small-, medium- and large-scale patterns allow for seamless and stimulating installations.



Grounded Spaces
Promoting a sense of calm in commercial settings, Grounded Spaces from **Shaw Contract** features nine patterns derived from classic weaves, plaids and intricate linework. The 10 colours available for each design are crafted from a carbon-neutral high-performance recycled nylon.



MultiSensory
Comprising five carpet styles (and one rug), the MultiSensory collection from **Mohawk Group** invites a reconnection to the senses through its rich tactility, soothing and refined hues, and relaxed patterns. Each design is offered in 14 colours that range from neutral to saturated; Dimensional Fade, a multi-textural pattern in varying tones, is shown here in Woodland Hush.

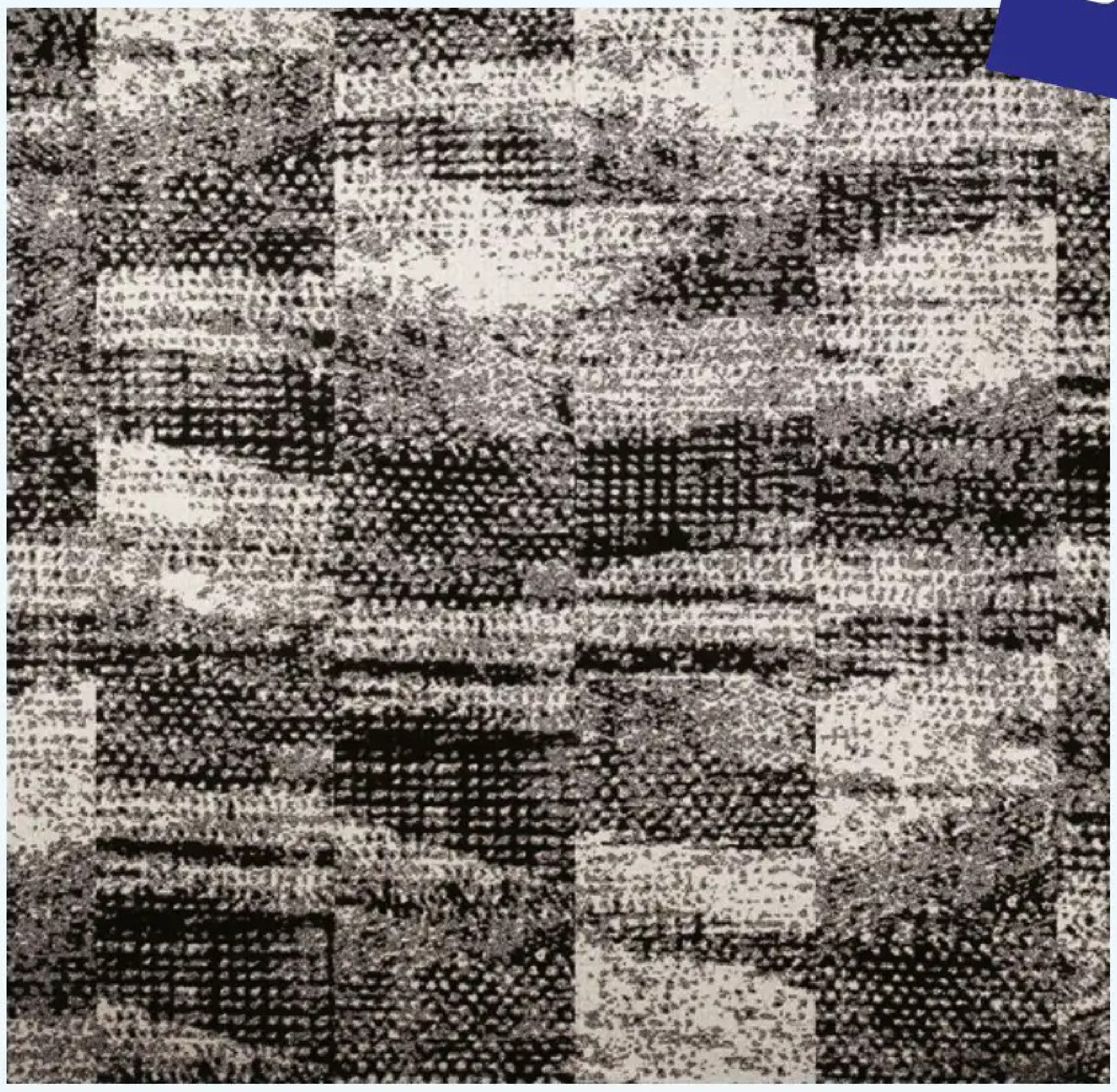


Dapper Dialogue
Like a well-coordinated wardrobe, the four styles in the Dapper Dialogue collection from **Mannington Commercial** can work together to form an elegant foundation in modern workspaces. Replicating plaid, herringbone and other classic menswear patterns, the tailored designs are offered in palettes of sophisticated neutrals.

BLACK & WHITE

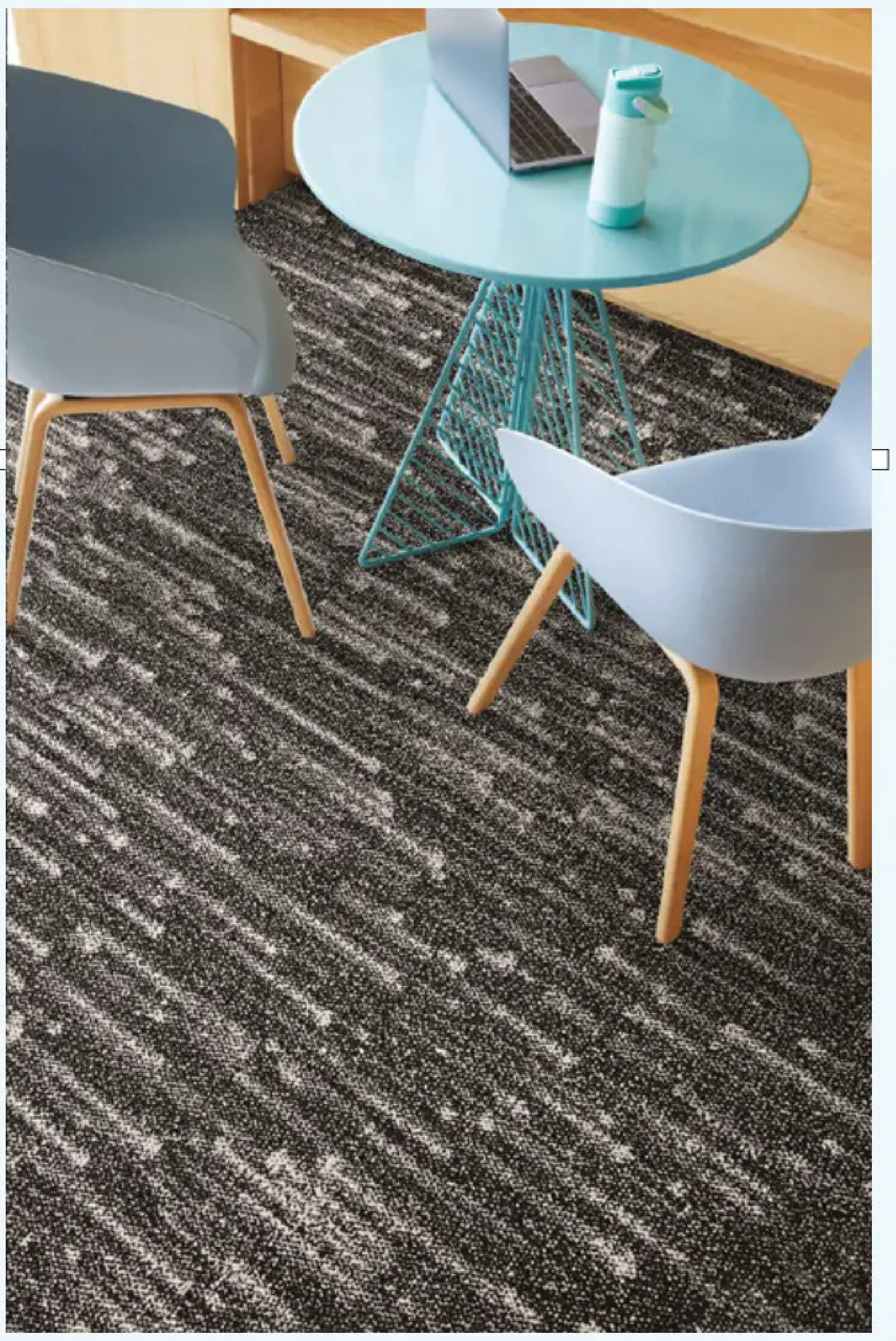
Modern Finds

Celebrating handcrafted design and traditional weaving techniques, the Modern Finds collection from **Patcraft** offers five complementary styles with varying constructions that can be installed in synchronized layouts. Each carpet has a neutral foundation that is accented by nine soft and muted colour palettes. Shown is Floated Weft in Muslin.



Tides

As its name implies, the Tides collection from **J+J Flooring** is an interpretation of the ocean's natural movements. Exploring how light bounces off the water's surface, its mesmerizing tonal shifts, and all its bubbles and undulations, the collection includes two patterns — Ebb (shown) and Flow — and 10 nature-based colours.

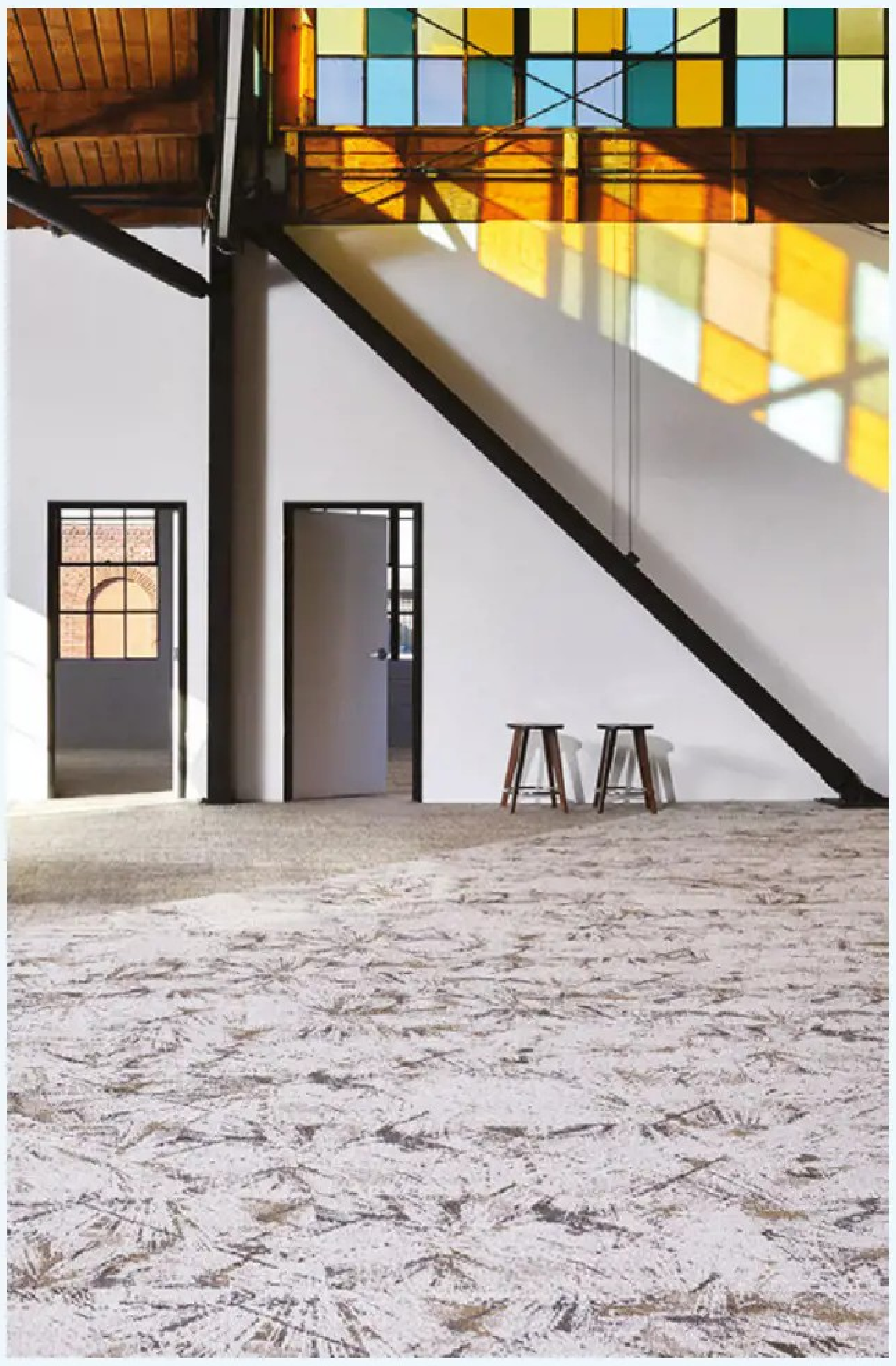


Stellar Horizons

Informed by the wonder of the night sky, the Stellar Horizons collection from **Interface** includes four celestial-influenced patterns — Meteor (shown), Cosmic Web, Endless Orbit and Lunar Landing — that can be mixed and matched to create inspiring floorscapes in a variety of settings.

Light Catcher

The four patterns in the Light Catcher collection from **Bentley Mills** were influenced by the ways light can manipulate colour — when it is bent, scattered, refracted, filtered — and illustrate distinct moments of that interplay. For example, Sun Dog (shown) evokes the phenomenon of sunlight bending through ice crystals in the atmosphere.



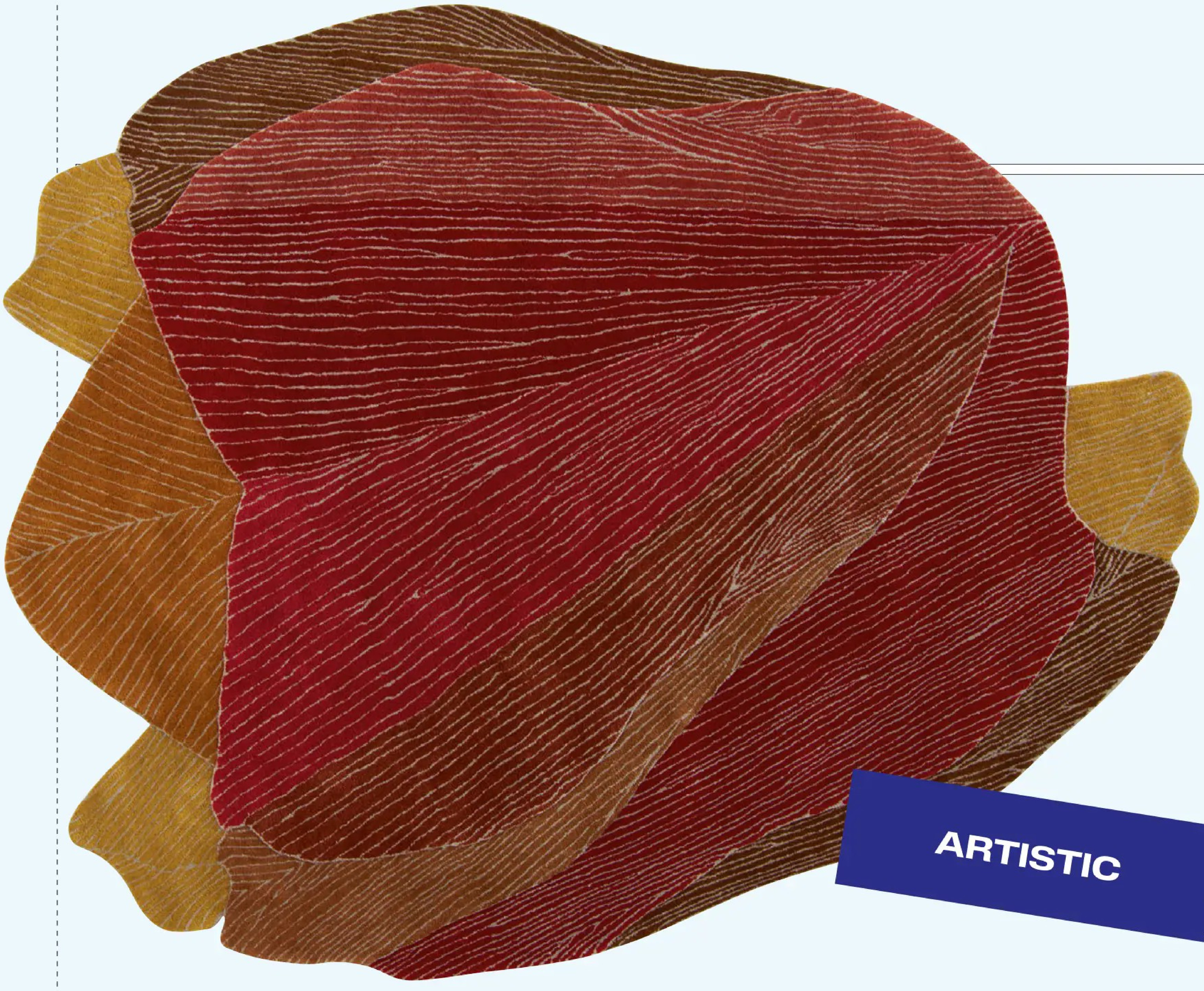
TACTILE

Fasad Collection
Referencing the brick facade of **Kasthall**'s factory in Sweden, the Fasad collection by architect David Chipperfield translates the solidity and texture of the building component into a woven surface made from recycled wool yarns and pure linen. Two versions are available: Duo (shown), with an even number of distinct "blocks," and Uno, which has a uniform expression.

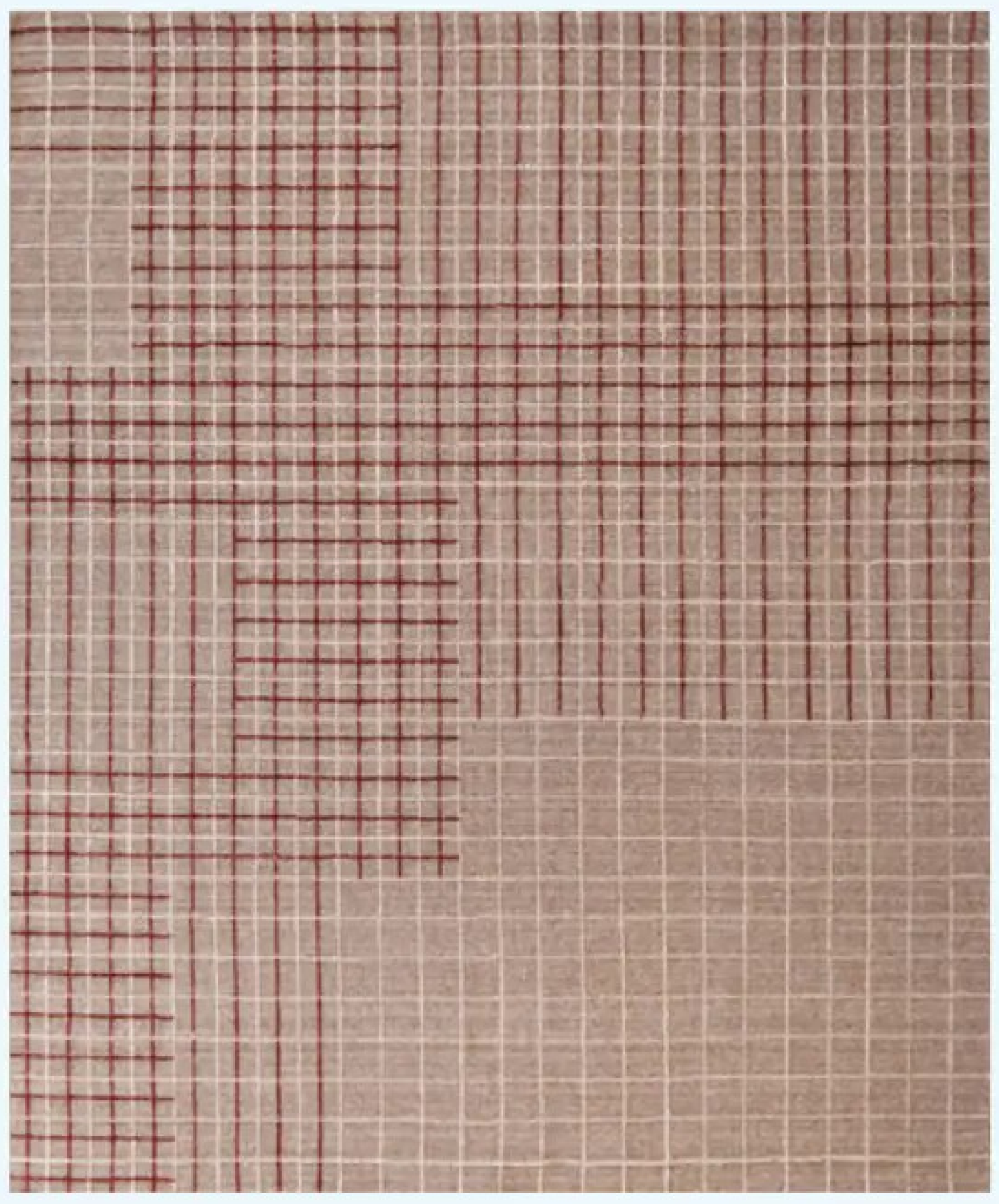
Orizzonti
Italian fashion designer Marta Ferri looked to "vast landscapes stretching toward the horizon" when devising her Orizzonti rug for **Molteni&C**. The tufted weave is defined by differing pile heights that give it an undulating intricacy that works in both classic and modern interiors.

Nimbus
Twisted strands of New Zealand wool are hand-coiled and double-stitched with natural jute to create Nimbus, which has a rippling surface texture that lends both depth and softness to interior spaces. Available in lichen-inspired Oakmoss (shown) and green-tinged Wasabi, it is part of **Armadillo**'s Soft Geometry collection, a five-rug series informed by a Japanese design sensibility.

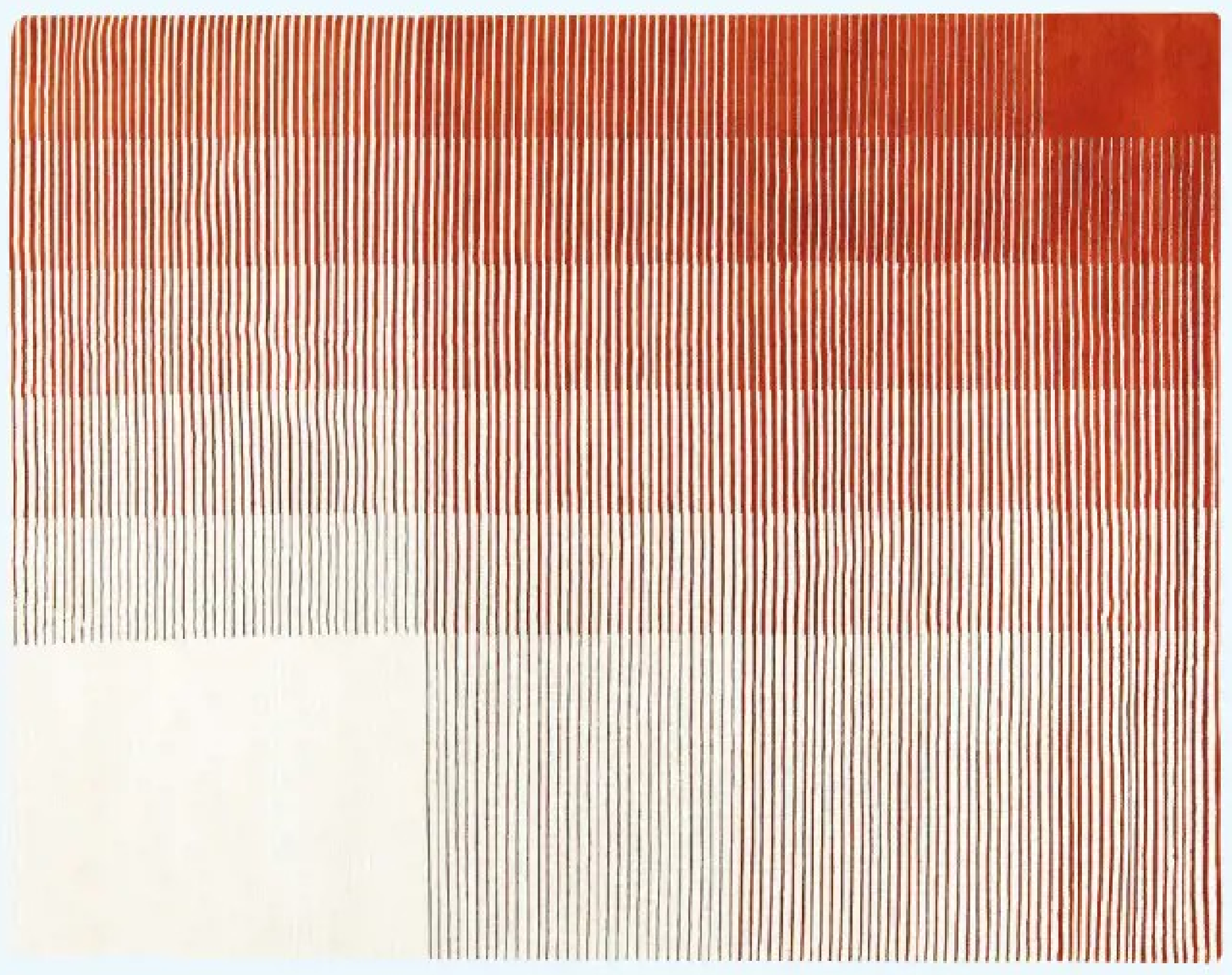
Level Rug
Inspired by fashion tailoring techniques, the monochromatic Level rug by Urd Moll Gundermann for **Normann Copenhagen** incorporates different pile heights to create contrasting textures that give the impression of tonal shifts. Offered in Light Yellow and Warm Grey, the rug is hand-tufted from 100 per cent wool and available in a range of rectangular sizes, as well as one circular format.



Natsu Rug
Evoking a fallen leaf, with its earthy reddish-orange tones and organic contours, the Natsu rug by Denis Guidone for **Ligne Roset** brings nature-inspired warmth to interiors. Irregular vein-like lines add visual dimension to the tufted wool rug, which is also available in a cooler blue-green.

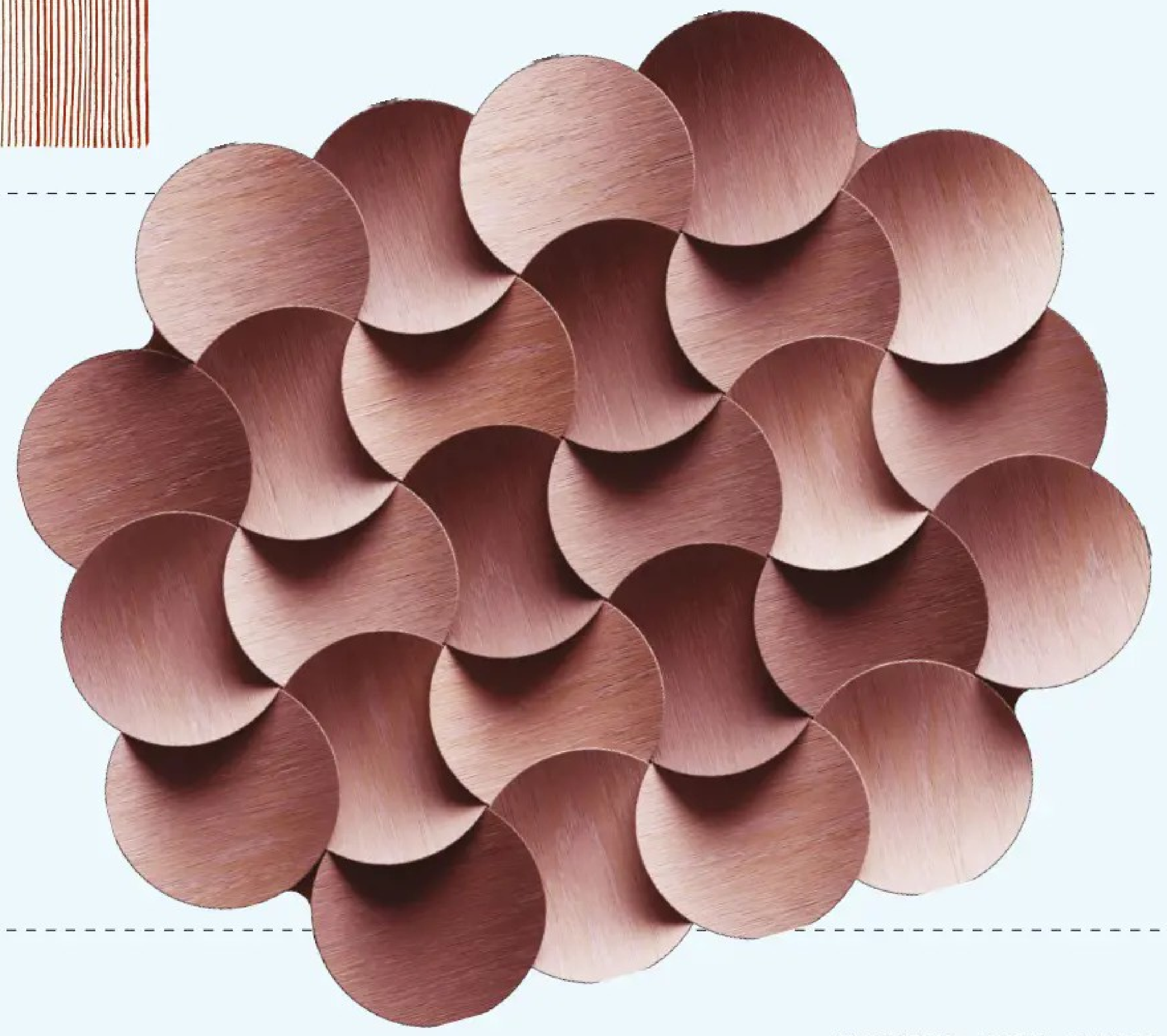


Variegated Grid
An architectural interpretation of a traditional check, the Variegated Grid rug — one of four contract-grade designs in the new Gensler and **Ben Soleimani** collaboration — has a linear rhythm with precisely spaced intersecting lines of varying hues. The hand-knotted wool rug is offered in six colours, including the Red/Espresso shown.



Stria
A linear motif with subtle transitions lends the Stria rug from **Creative Matters** varied dimension and a sense of movement. Available in Clay (shown) or Pebble, it is one of 10 designs in the Loominary collection, a series that harmonizes colours and patterns in a tactile play on illusion.

Timber Tones
Wood and craftsmanship in all their timeless appeal are woven together in the Timber Tones collection by Sjoerd Vroonland for **Moooi Carpets**, which merges traditional artistry with modern techniques. A collaboration with marquetry studio FineMarq, the four designs in the series (three rugs and one carpet) have hyper-realistic characteristics and an enduring sophistication.



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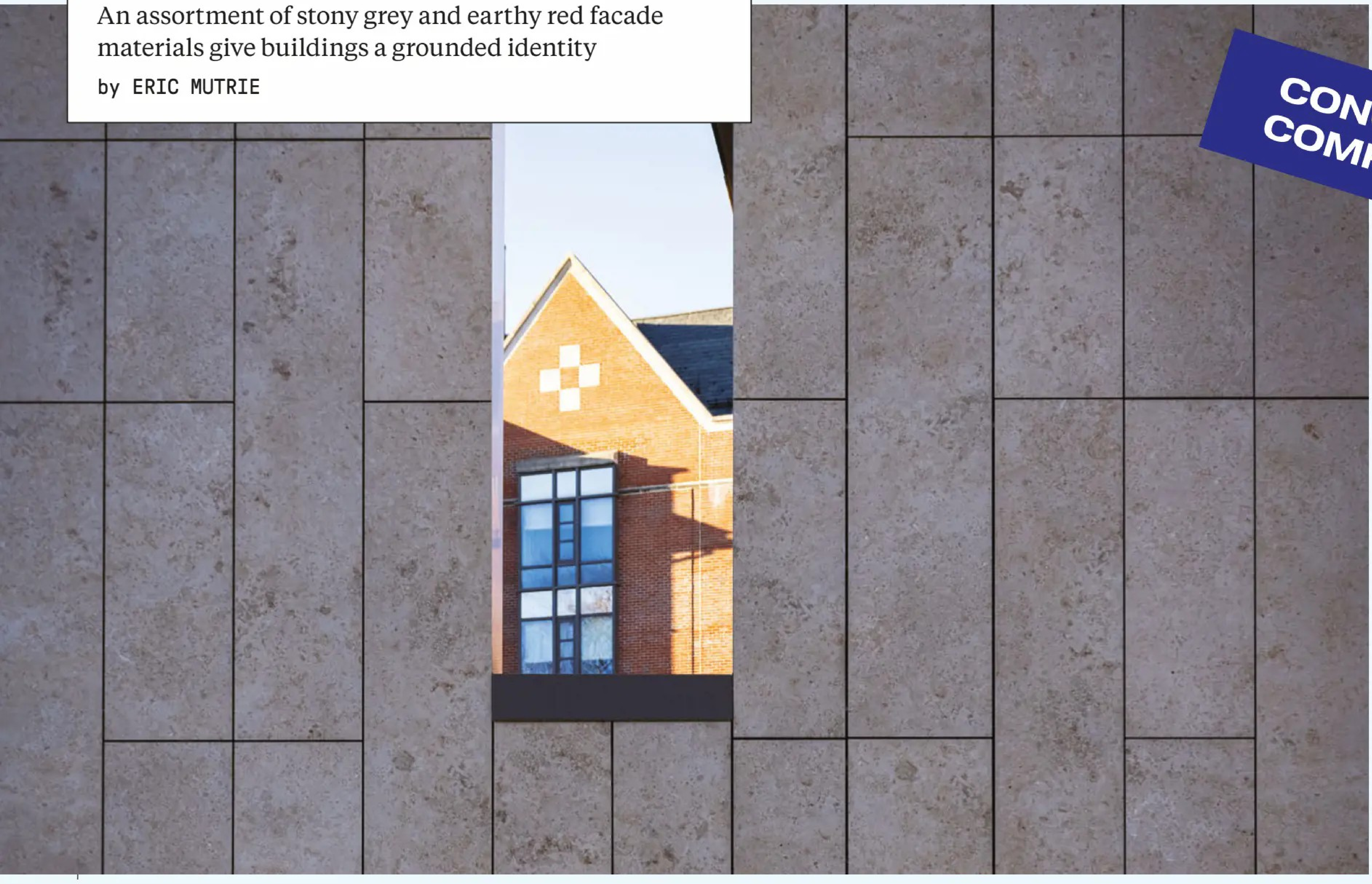
MATERIALS

Exterior Cladding

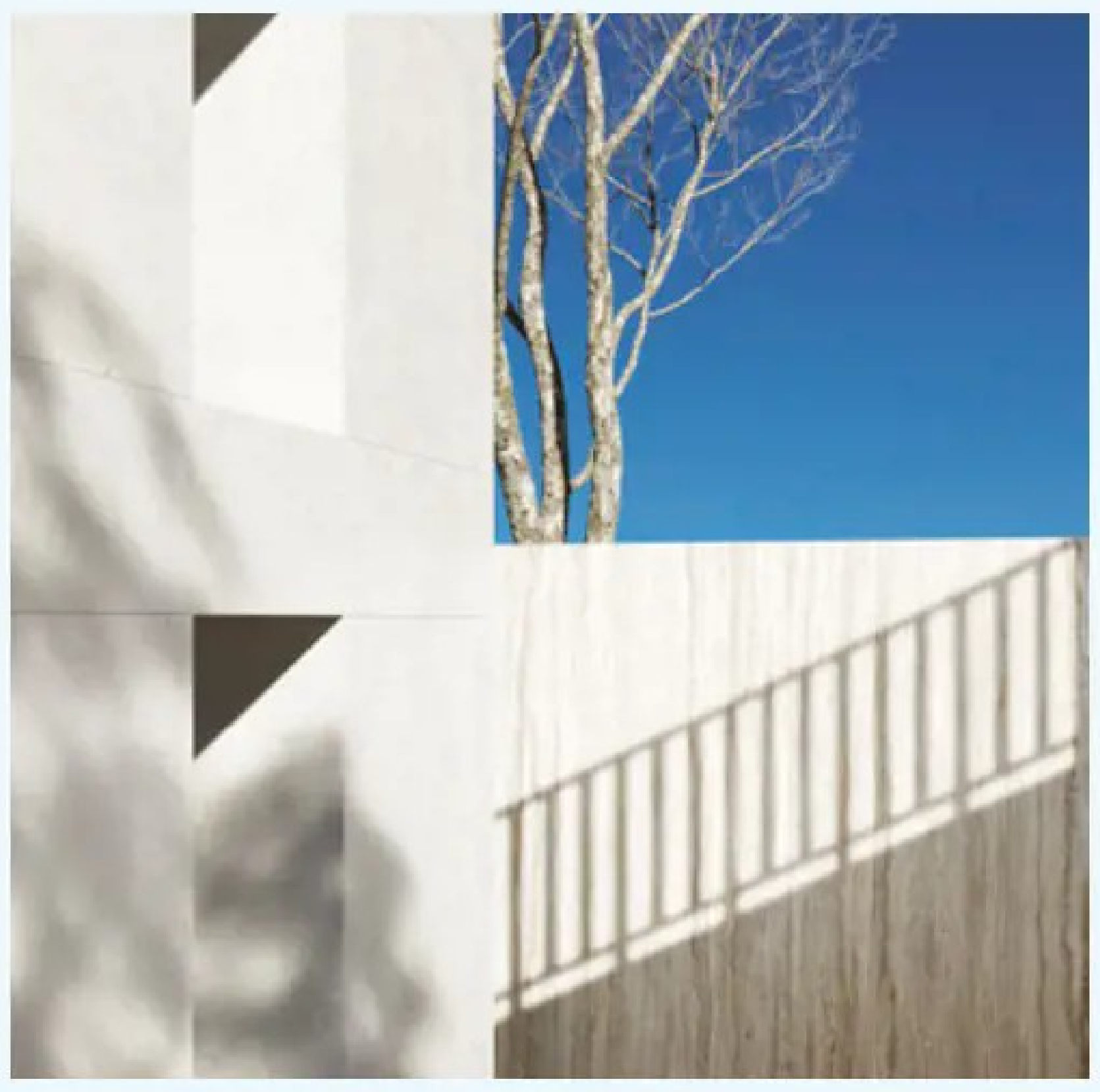
An assortment of stony grey and earthy red facade materials give buildings a grounded identity

by ERIC MUTRIE



CONCRETE & COMPOSITES

Jura Stone
For a new student residence at the University of Connecticut, Sasaki and Newman Architects (working with Cladding Concepts) leveraged a custom version of **NeoLith**'s limestone-inspired sintered stone, which is able to stand up to the Northeast's freeze–thaw cycles. Each lightweight, six-millimetre-thick panel was reinforced with a mesh backing and aluminum rails, then hung on J-channels for streamlined installation.



Pietra Edition Exterior
Dekton's Mediterranean-inflected range from designer Daniel Germani encourages mix-and-match combinations of different patterns, all taking inspiration from natural stone. Here, the subtle veining of Polar (shown at left) complements the more expressive travertine-like Trevi (right).

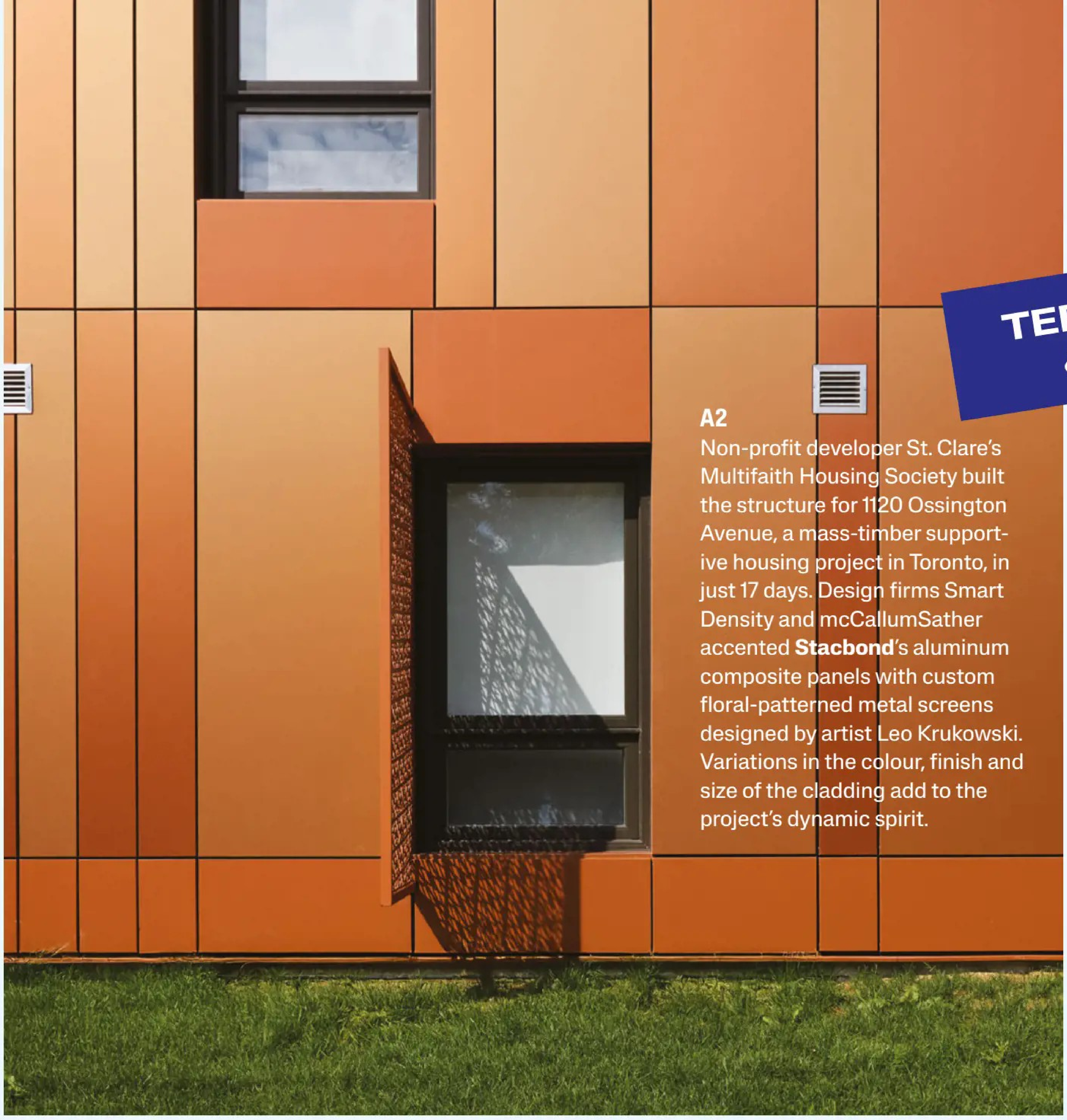
Concrete Skin
Weiss/Manfredi Architecture and Teeple Architects worked with **Rieder** (through Sound Solutions) to produce the precast glass-fibre-reinforced concrete panels that define the facade of the Schwartz Reisman Innovation Campus at the University of Toronto. The panels shown here were fabricated in the manufacturer's Cotton colour, with a discreet terrazzo texture.

Marvel T
Continuing its ongoing collaboration with global hospitality firm HBA, **Atlas Concorde** developed this new range of travertine-style porcelain designs that set out to bring an airy ambiance to indoor or outdoor environments with soft, tone-on-tone veining. The collection includes four patterns and seven colours.

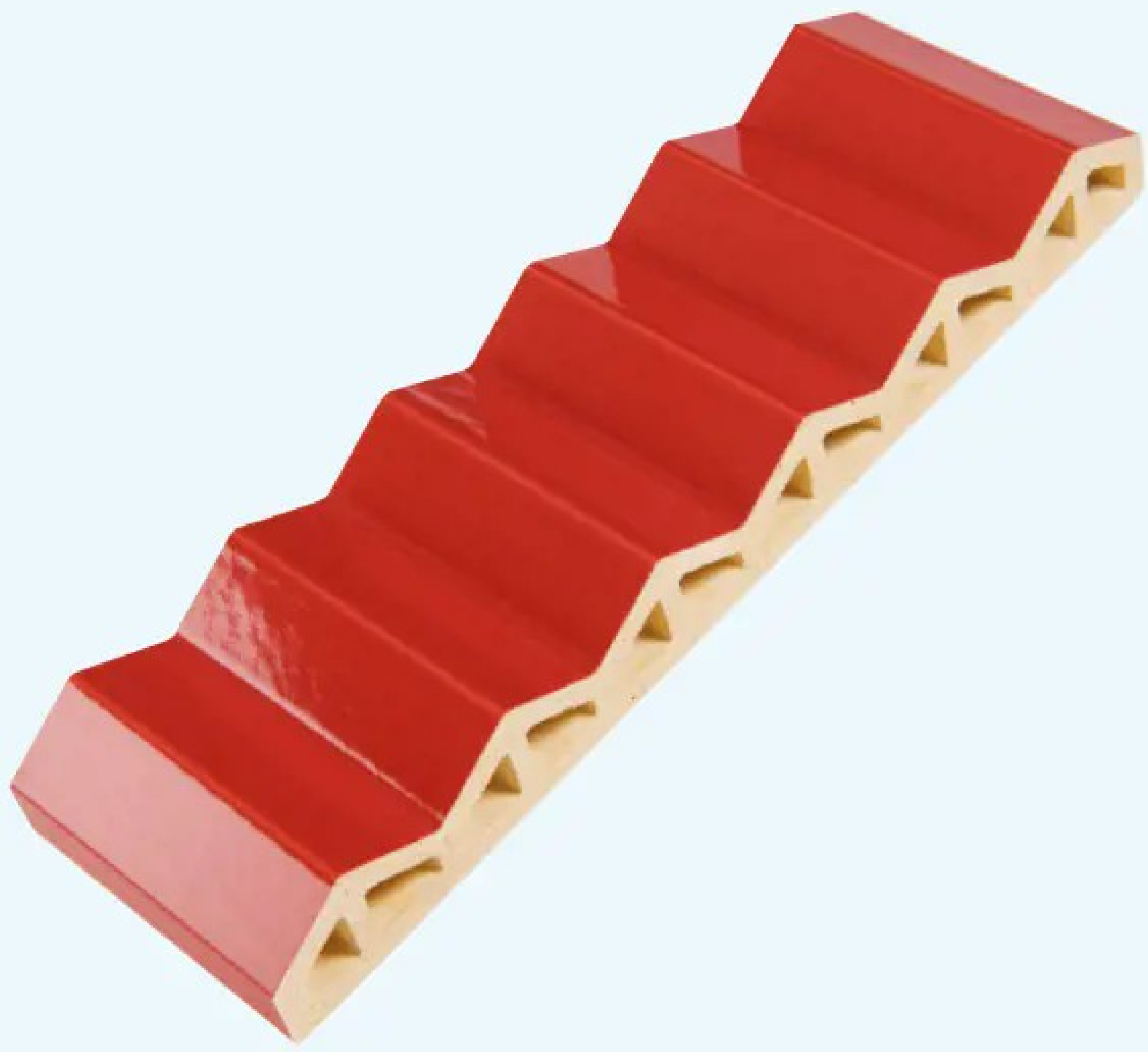
MUSEUM
Entrance

Lab325
ABK Stone's porcelain slabs offer a realistic alternative to concrete cement for ventilated facades. Here, 1.6-by-3.2-metre wall slabs in the Base Ash colourway join matching floor tiles (both measuring six millimetres thick), as well as planters and benches clad in a combination of Base Ash and Base Pepper slabs.

TERRACOTTA & METAL

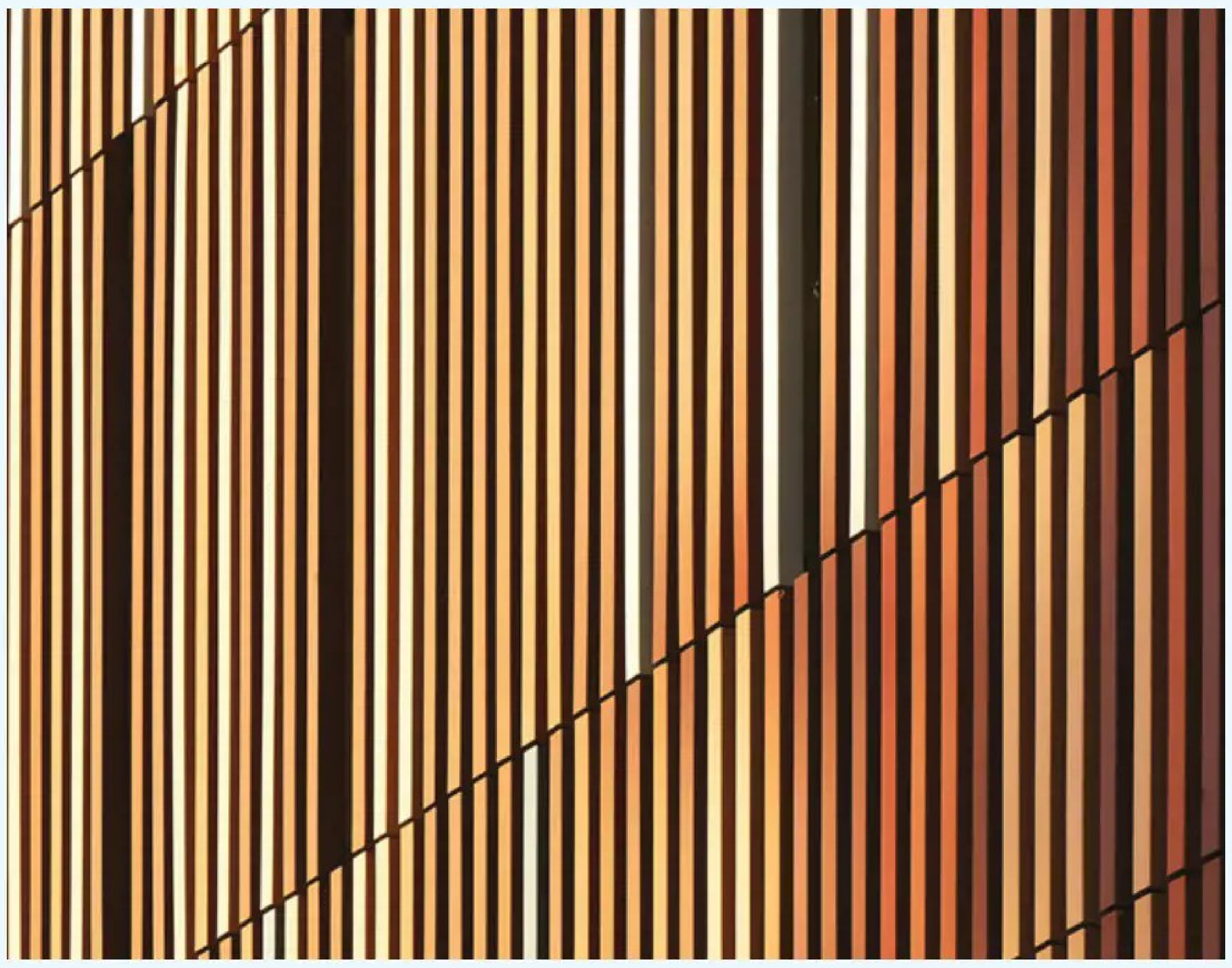


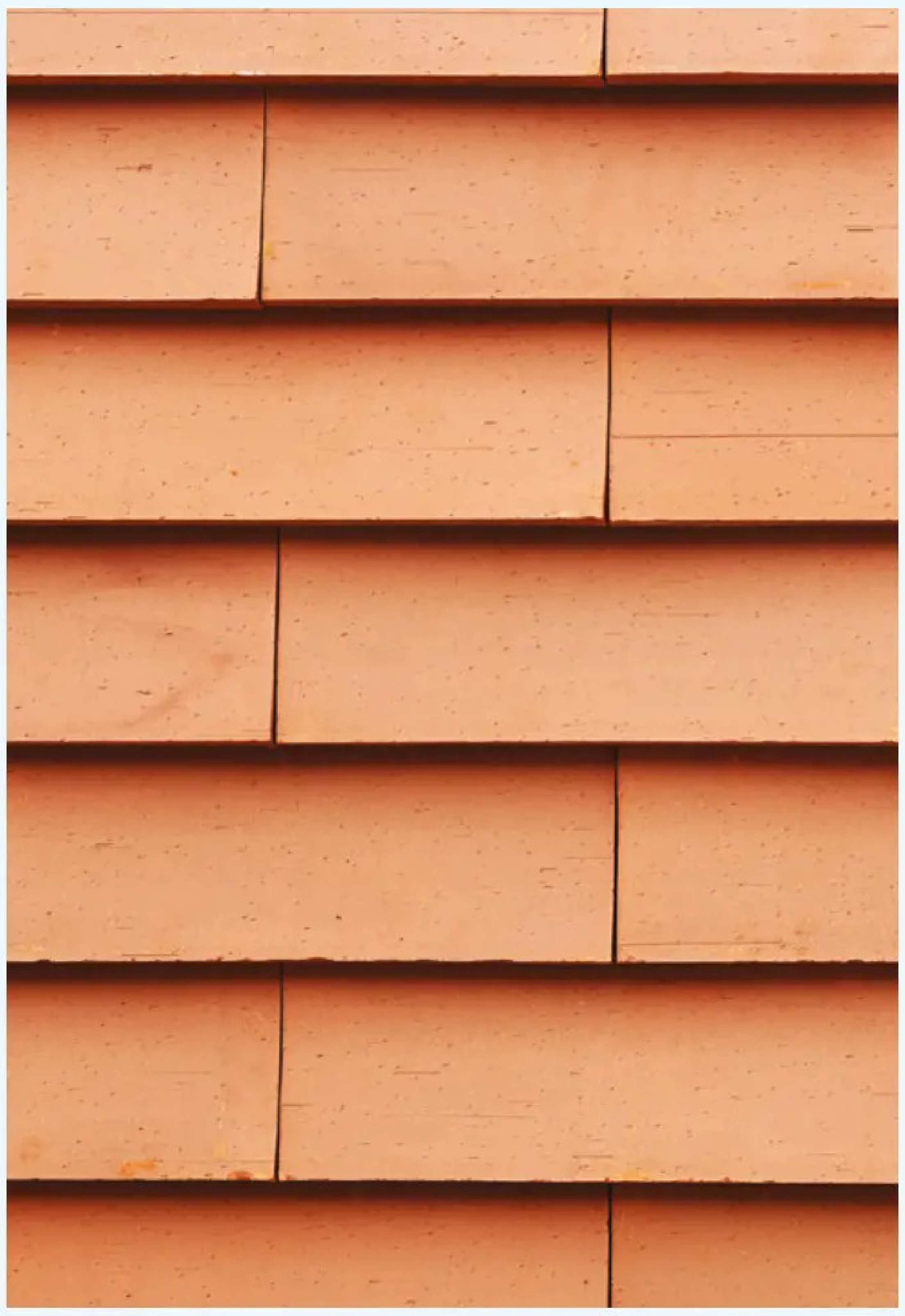
A2
Non-profit developer St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society built the structure for 1120 Ossington Avenue, a mass-timber supportive housing project in Toronto, in just 17 days. Design firms Smart Density and mcCallumSather accented **Stacbond**'s aluminum composite panels with custom floral-patterned metal screens designed by artist Leo Krukowski. Variations in the colour, finish and size of the cladding add to the project's dynamic spirit.



TerraClad
For Cannady Hall, a new facility for the School of Architecture at Houston's Rice University, Zurich-based Karamuk Kuo developed a rainscreen system built from three different profiles of **Boston Valley's** glazed terracotta panels. Their red colour and sculptural, undulating shape offered a good match to the brickwork and decorative friezes found on neighbouring structures.

Terrart
FaulknerBrowns Architects combined a range of coppery tones in this cluster of vertically mounted baguettes (from **NBK Architectural Terracotta**), which wraps around the second storey of the University of Portsmouth's Ravelin Sports Centre. The building's efficient shell helped it earn a BREEAM Outstanding rating.





SK1N
Delivering a contemporary take on traditional brickwork, **Glen-Gery**'s new made-in-Italy terracotta offering for residential construction is non-combustible, colourfast and ready to stand up to the elements. Even better, it emits no VOCs and is fully recyclable. A rear-ventilated rainscreen system boosts thermal performance and air circulation. Choose from seven nature-inspired colours.

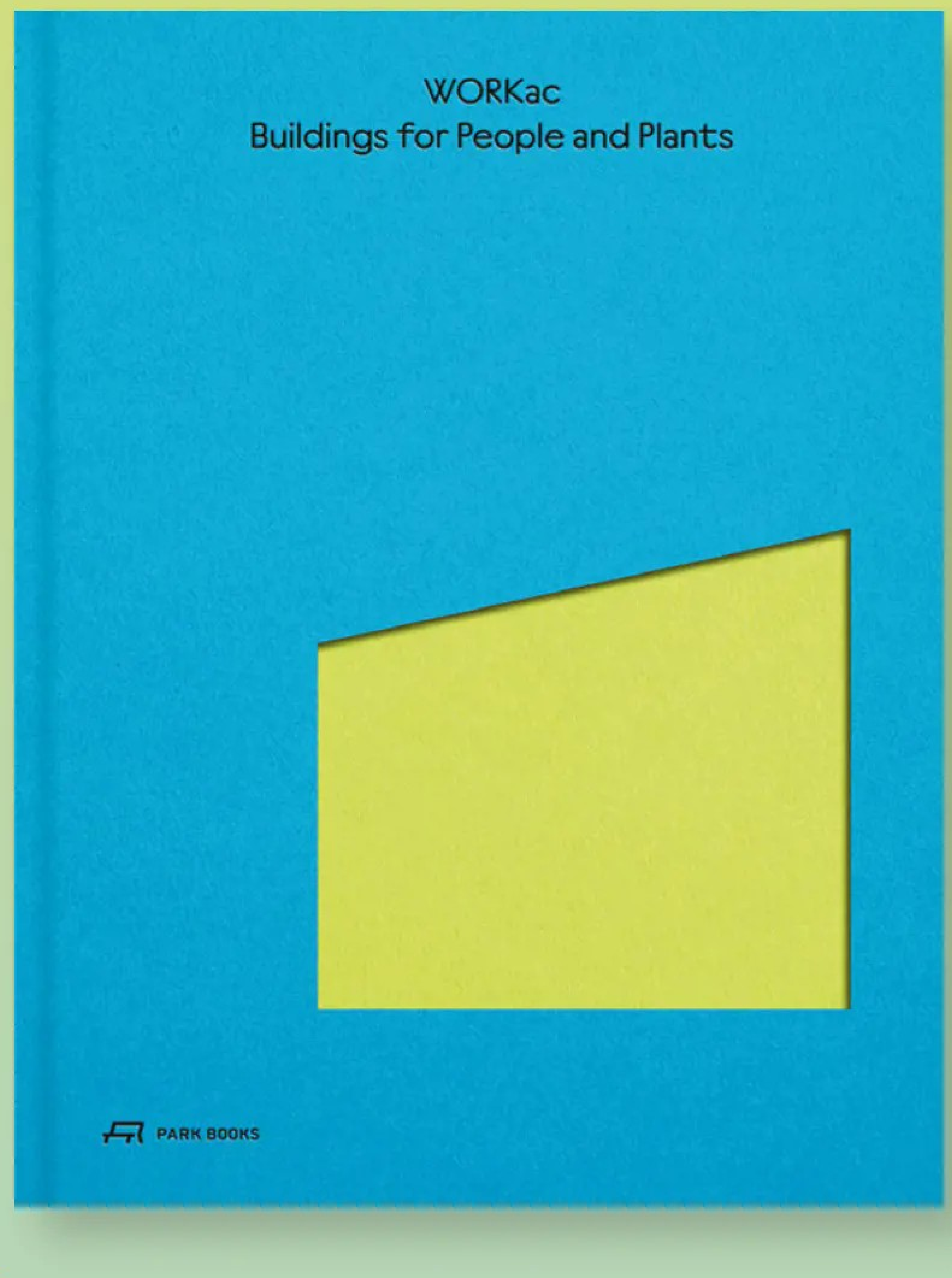
Baguette
Shildan's terracotta sunscreen fins wrap a four-storey addition to the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education designed by Annum Architects, creating a modern complement to the adjacent red-brick wing. Panels are available for both horizontal and vertical applications.

PHOTOS BY HUFTON+CROW (NBK); LIRON WEISSMAN (STACBOND); SINZIANA VELICESCU (SHILDAN); TOM ARBAN (RIEDER); TIM GORMLEY (NEOLITH)

Green Living

Three resources model diverse new possibilities in sustainable design

by SYDNEY SHILLING



BOOK

Buildings for People and Plants

BY WORKac
Published by Park Books

"It is easy to create the expected, but when you challenge each building to do more, you give it the opportunity to solve problems and provide services — ones that may initially seem incongruous with the project, but that prove to be the perfect fit," write WORKac's Dan Wood and Amale Andraos in the introductory essay of their monograph–meets–coffee table book. The New York firm's straightforward approach to sustainability means first ensuring that each project delivers real value. "Density and preservation are just as important to sustainability as technological advancements. So is urbanism. If every building contributes in some perhaps unique way, then a neighbourhood or city can slowly pivot, and the collective can pave the way for a sustainable future," the architects explain. The buildings featured in this volume exemplify this ethos, from their recently completed North Boulder Library (whose ramp incorporates a musical installation courtesy of Andraos's sister Mouna's firm, Daily tous les jours) to the Miami Museum Garage, a paragon of inventive adaptive re-use. Showcased solely in images, the projects are allowed to speak for themselves (at the back of the book, short narratives are shown opposite stunning drawings that bring the vision behind each building to life).

FILM

With an Acre

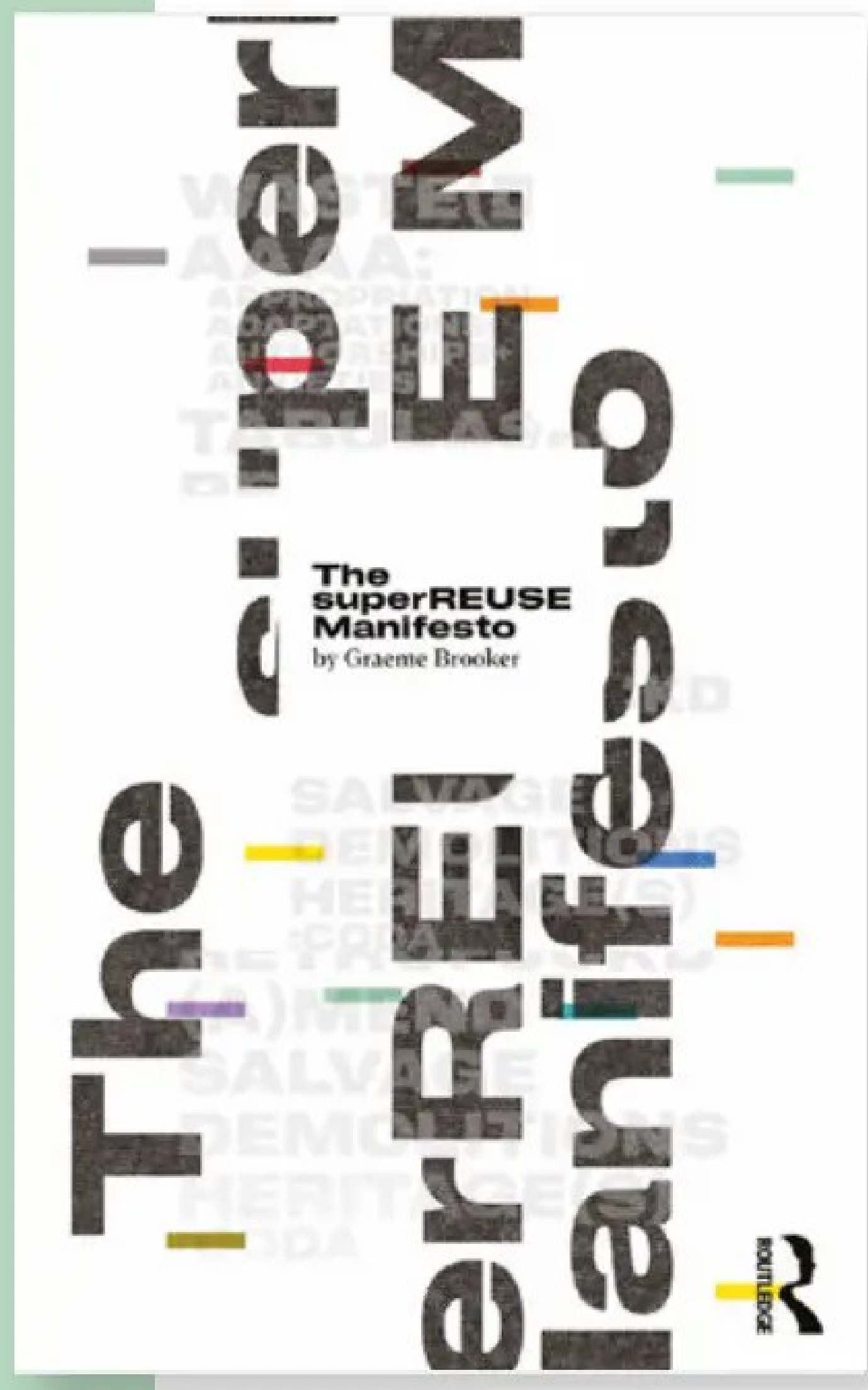
For over 150 years, Brazil has been the world's largest coffee producer, accounting for about one-third of the global supply. This productivity has come at a price: A history of brutal extractivism has decimated local ecosystems. "If we don't start changing the way we grow coffee, we'll stop growing coffee in maybe 10 years," explains Milena Rodrigues, founder of coffee-growing collective Flor de Café, in this film produced by the Canadian Centre for Architecture. But as its opening slide proclaims, "This is not a documentary about coffee. It is a story about trying to practice a different form of architecture." The film follows architect Carla Juaçaba as she works alongside Rodrigues to build a museum and educational base for regenerative agriculture and conservation in Minas Gerais. Once complete, Juaçaba's design will sit lightly on the land, drawing inspiration from both the stilt houses of local Indigenous people and the structure of the billboards that line the roads. Emphasizing the power of a collaborative approach, the film shares insights from a team that includes coffee farmers exploring new ways of planting, transforming monocultures into agroforestry systems.

BOOK

The superREUSE Manifesto

BY GRAEME BROOKER
Published by Routledge

By 2050, the increase in waste produced annually will outpace population growth by more than double, reaching an astonishing 3.4 billion tonnes. The question of what to do with it all is just one that author (and professor at the Royal College of Art London) Graeme Brooker explores in this manifesto about re-use at all scales. He emphasizes the importance of seeing cities, buildings and objects as constantly in flux — and re-use as a tool to unveil the beauty that already exists within them. "To wipe the slate clean and start again is not just the easy way out, it is the failure of intellect, of an economic system, and of political thought and purpose," he writes, also noting that what is considered heritage worth preserving is itself political. Each chapter highlights the rich history of re-use across cultures, from the Japanese art of *kintsugi* to repurposed shipping container architecture. But he also isn't afraid to point out projects (like Zaha Hadid's Port House in Antwerp) that have, in his opinion, missed the mark. "Graeme's manifesto tells us what *not* to do as much as what to do," writes Ben Falk in his foreword.



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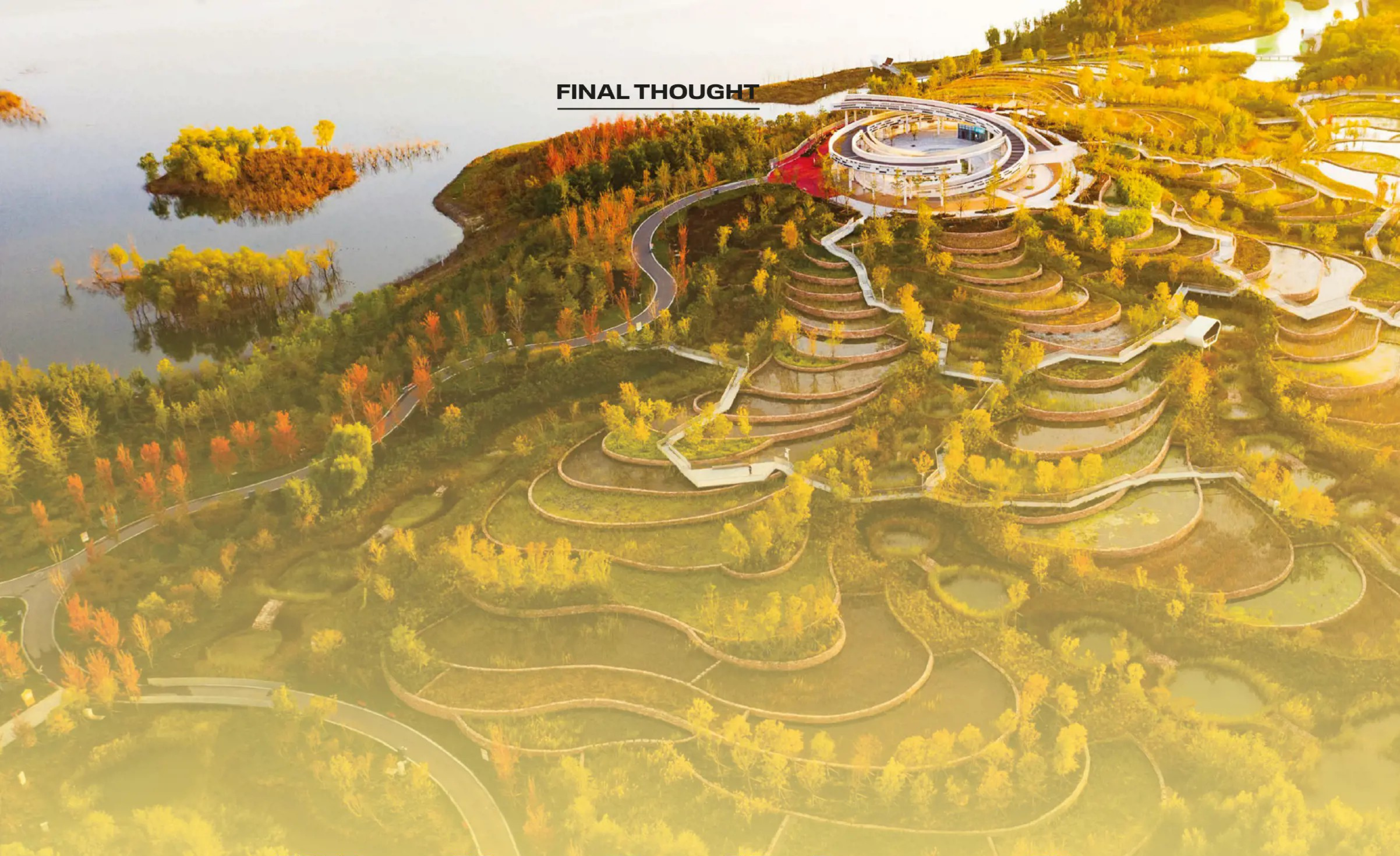

What Kongjian Yu Leaves Us

The Turenscape founder didn't just remediate landscapes — he mended the future of our fragile planet

by ELIZABETH PAGLIACOLO

Landscape architect
Kongjian Yu, 1963–2025

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT was an urban waste dump. Coal ash, garbage, slag — those were the only features of this former industrial site in the Chinese city of Handan. That was the dismal panorama, stretching out for 325 hectares, that Kongjian Yu would have first encountered. By the time he was done with it, though, the place would become the vibrant composition of cascading terraces that you see here — one that cleans wastewater and recycles solid waste, with a 20-metre-high mound made of debris at its apex. It's a marvel, inviting back nature — and people, who were always gregariously welcomed into Yu's rescued landscapes with whimsical pavilions and elevated walkways.

The Handan Wastewater Purification Terraces is one of a thousand projects that Yu and his Beijing firm, Turenscape, completed in 200 cities across Asia over the past 25 years. On September 23, when the 62-year-old practitioner was killed in a plane crash in Brazil that also claimed the lives of filmmakers Luiz Ferraz and Rubens Crispim Junior and pilot Marcelo Pereira de Barros, he was working on a documentary about sponge cities, the praxis at the centre of his life's work. In 2013, China adopted sponge cities as national policy, no doubt swayed as much by Yu's incredible accomplishments as by his undeniable charisma and modesty.

That Yu died while making a film that could bring his vision to the broader world adds even more sorrow to the tragedy. The sponge city — where water is absorbed, cleaned and stored by green, permeable, nature-based systems — is a necessity in our ever more climate change–ravaged world, but it also still seems something of a dream. Yu's projects, however, convey the notion that anything is possible: that you can look upon a vast neglected landscape and overlay on it a thriving ecosystem with space for people, plants and wildlife; that ecology, culture and economy could work together; and that landscape architecture could make a meaningful difference on a massive scale.

Yu had the numbers to back up his schemes: In the Handan project, 13,600 cubic metres of wastewater from the local water treatment plant is cleaned every day, nourishing both the adjacent wetland and saving about one million kWh of electricity compared to conventional water treatment processes. Another project, Benjakitti Forest Park in Thailand, has brought some 91 species of birds back to a place that also attracts tens of thousands of visitors daily. But more importantly, Yu had the heart. His spaces are joyous, playful, beautiful. He was taken from us at a time when we need him more than ever. We can mourn the sponge cities he would have gone on to create or we can honour his legacy by taking the revitalized landscapes he has left us and allowing them to inspire us to do what he's been telling us to do all along: to build our own sponge cities around the world.

PHOTOS BY COREY KELLY (PORTRAIT); JIN ZHANG (LANDSCAPE)

Zieta. Blown with love
zieta
Catalogue

Rondo mirror, colour: jade green
photo: M. Żurowski, light: G. Kurzejamski, production: RiverCrew

SENZAFINE WALK-IN CLOSET
DESIGN POLIFORM
POLIFORM.COM

POLIFORM MONTREAL
4410 BOUL SAINT LAURENT
MONTREAL H2W1Z5
+1 514 287 9038
INFO@LATITUDENORD.COM

POLIFORM TORONTO
351 KING ST E – GROUND FLOOR
TORONTO M5A 0L6
+1 416 601 1661
CONTACT@POLIFORMTORONTO.COM

POLIFORM VANCOUVER
779 PENDER STREET W
VANCOUVER V6C 1G9
+1 604 656 6466
INFO@POLIFORMVANCOUVER.COM